

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. article	HRC Talking it Over article re: fax number [partial] (2 pages)	02/12/1998	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Shirley Sagawa
OA/Box Number: 24339

FOLDER TITLE:

Talking it Over [Columns of the First Lady] [Binder] [4]

2013-0124-S

rc1077

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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 tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

women

Divider Title: _____

TALKING IT OVER

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

RELEASE: WEEKEND, AUGUST 5-6, 1995

Every place I have ever worked, a strange thing happens at 3:00 in the afternoon. Women start grabbing for the phones.

It's the "anxious mom" phenomenon -- mothers calling home to make sure their children have arrived safely from school.

I know because I've done it hundreds of times myself. And, like any working mother, I can tell you about the times I have had to leave at midday or miss work altogether because of a family emergency.

Once, as a young lawyer, I had to be in court at 9 a.m. for a big trial. My husband was out of town. My daughter was sick. And I was in a panic.

I managed in situations like that -- but only because I had extraordinary support: baby sitters, a mother-in-law nearby, a mother who visited regular, and a husband who was eager to help.

Most working women are not so lucky.

With American families as overworked and as mobile as they are today, relying on relatives and friends for child care is not always an option. Most workplaces do not provide or subsidize child care. Day-care centers don't take sick kids, and most charge high fees for late pickups.

And too often, employers penalize rather than help women who need to adjust their schedules to attend to pressing family obligations.

As a 42-year-old auto-factory worker and mother of two said to me recently: "What do you do with your kids when you are assigned the 4 p.m. to midnight shift?"

Whether they are federal judges or fast-food cooks, working women everywhere are not getting enough support as they struggle to meet the competing demands of family, work and career.

I know this from my own experience, as well as from conversations with my friends. But you don't have to take my word for it. Just ask any of the working women I met with recently in Atlanta and Santa Fe. Or ask the 250,000 working women who responded to a Department of Labor survey earlier this year.

"We have to be a wife, a mother and a professional, and to be ourselves, which usually takes last place," a 37-year-old intensive-care nurse said at a chips-and-salsa get-together in Santa Fe.

"I nearly kill pedestrians trying to get to the day-care center on time (to avoid the late fees after 6 p.m.)," an assistant bank vice president told me in Atlanta.

Even a federal judge was feeling the pressure. "When I was a lawyer, all of the partners had wives who didn't work," said this mother of four. "They didn't have to worry about picking up the dry cleaning or picking up the kids."

Today, three out of four working women have school-age children. The vast majority of working women earn less than \$25,000 a year. Not surprisingly, stress ranks as the No. 1 problem for most of these women.

The clear message from many women -- and men -- I have talked to is that they need a more supportive workplace culture.

Even at a place as hectic and workaholic as the White House, we have tried to offer some flexibility to working parents. One of my husband's top campaign advisers took a month off right before the election in 1992 to spend time with his new son. One of my administrative assistants used to bring her newborn to the office and, if necessary, nursed him during meetings. Another member of my staff worked from home during the final two months of her pregnancy. In fact, we even keep a few toys around the office in case parents need to bring their children to work.

We are hardly alone in this. Employers and organizations in the public and private sectors are beginning to recognize that family-friendly workplaces are not just good for morale but also for the bottom line:

- In San Francisco, a group of businesses, unions and community groups joined forces to establish a 24-hour day-care center for airport employees.

- In Boston, a school-bus schedule was redesigned to make it easier for children to get to after-school programs.

- In Northern California, a consortium of law and consulting firms are establishing an 800-hotline number that employees can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for pre-screened, in-home emergency child and elder care.

- In New Jersey, a company with 3,000 employees is creating a pilot program offering compressed four-day work weeks, job sharing, part-time and flex-time options, and telecommuting for its work force.

Instead of leaving hard-working, stressed-out parents to fend for themselves, we all need to do more to bring some harmony to our work and family lives.

COPYRIGHT 1995 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TALKING IT OVER

BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

RELEASE: WEEKEND, AUGUST 26-27, 1995

One day in the summer of 1978, I was knocking on doors in a small town in eastern Arkansas, trying to drum up support for my husband in the upcoming election for governor.

It was the middle of the day, and most of the people at home were older women -- women who I assumed would be going to the polls. Imagine my surprise when one woman told me that her husband did the voting in their family. Another said that, since her husband's death, she hadn't known whom to vote for. And a third explained that she couldn't vote because she hadn't paid her poll tax, a requirement that had been outlawed years before.

Seventeen years have passed since then, and as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of women's suffrage, women in America are hardly flocking to the polls to exercise their hard-won privileges.

A smaller percentage of women vote in national elections today than voted 30 years ago. Fewer than half go to the polls in non-presidential election years.

Sadly, many women feel that their vote doesn't really matter to their own futures or the future of our country.

It might also be that we have so many obligations in our everyday lives. Women are busy raising children, taking care of aging parents, holding jobs (often working longer hours for lower wages) and running households.

But even so, we all should be able to find the time to vote, especially now that registration can be done at the local department of motor vehicles, the government social services office, the public library or even through the mail.

We owe it to ourselves to make our voices heard. After all, women's suffrage did not come easily. It took 72 years of hard work.

It took the vision of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who launched the suffrage movement in 1848, and the courage of Susan B. Anthony, who was arrested, tried and fined for attempting to vote in the presidential election of 1872.

It took thousands of others -- from seamstresses to socialites -- who joined parades, pageants and picket lines on behalf of suffrage.

It took men, too. Men like Harry Burn, the young legislator from Tennessee who cast the decisive vote in favor of women's suffrage on Aug. 18, 1920, but only after receiving an admonishing letter from his mother.

"Dear son," said the letter from Mrs. J.L. Burn. "Hurrah and vote for suffrage. ... I have been watching to see how you stood, but have not noticed anything yet. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. (Carrie Chapman) Catt put 'rat' in ratification. Your Mother."

Harry Burn took his mother's advice, and eight days later, on Aug. 26, 1920, suffrage was finally granted. But for months thereafter, Harry Burn had to travel the state guarded by a local blacksmith who carried a big hammer in his pocket.

He got off easy compared to some. Many who campaigned for suffrage went to jail for their cause. Some were scorned and ridiculed. Some lost jobs. Some gave up their possessions to raise money for hundreds of suffrage campaigns that were waged in state legislatures and at state and national party conventions.

To those Americans, voting was the most fundamental right of living in a democracy. It was essential to women's progress in the world. And that's why women before us fought so hard to achieve it.

Women's suffrage, finally granted with ratification of the 19th Amendment, was nothing short of a social revolution. With the vote, women in America could influence laws. They could have some say over their destinies. They could enjoy the full privileges of citizenship.

When I travel overseas, I think about suffrage often. On several recent trips, I have met women who have been persecuted, imprisoned or even exiled for their efforts to gain basic legal and political rights for women. I have visited countries, newly freed from the yoke of totalitarianism, where citizens walk miles and stand in line for hours to cast their ballots.

And each time, I come home thankful for the blessings we Americans have.

This week, let's celebrate the anniversary of women's suffrage by taking stock of the sacrifices that so many women and men made on our behalf.

And let's remember the words of the great suffrage leaders.

As Sojourner Truth, the 19th century anti-slavery and women's rights advocate, put it: "If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn this world upside down alone, then we together ought to be able to turn it right side up again."

But we can only do it if we vote.

**COPYRIGHT 1995 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, SEPTEMBER 2-3, 1995**

As you read this column, I am traveling to Beijing for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.

The United States is sending a delegation of 45 men and women. I am the honorary co-chair, and I know many of our members personally. One is a former Republican governor of New Jersey. Another is an Ursuline nun. There is a nurse, a law professor and the editor in chief of Ladies Home Journal. Among the group are mothers, fathers, Democrats, Republicans, liberals and conservatives.

What unites this group and thousands of others traveling to Beijing is a desire to focus world attention on issues that matter most to women, children and families: access to health care, education, jobs and credit, and the chance to enjoy basic legal and human rights and participate fully in the political life of one's country.

Our ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, is the head of our delegation. A distinguished scholar, public servant and mother of three daughters, she knows more than most about the meaning of freedom and democracy. She and her family were forced to flee both Hitler and Stalin.

Tom Kean, the president of Drew University, is a delegation vice chair. I first met him when he was governor of New Jersey and my husband was governor of Arkansas. Although he is a Republican and my husband is a Democrat, they joined forces to improve education for America's children.

The women's conference is about making the world a better place by helping women live up to their God-given potential at home, in school, on the job, in their communities and as mothers, wives, learners, workers and citizens.

It is also a celebration of families, the bedrock of any society.

Families are undermined when women and children lack the opportunities they need to thrive. In some places around the world, for example, girls are still valued so little that they are left to die at birth, denied health care and education, or sold into prostitution by their families.

Figuring out ways to remedy these wrongs and provide women opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives will be the key issue for 50,000 women and men who gather in China this week.

It saddens me that a historic event like this is being misconstrued by a small but vocal group of critics trying to spread the notion that the U.N. gathering is really the work of radicals and atheists bent on destroying our families.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 9/2-3/95

Page 2

The composition of our delegation refutes that charge. It is a broad-based, family-oriented group committed to the mainstream agenda of the conference.

The deputy chair of our delegation, Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, is one of America's most devoted moms. A former television news correspondent and member of Congress, she and her husband are raising 11 children -- two are adopted and three are refugees from Asia -- in their home in Pennsylvania. "I don't get involved with things that don't celebrate the family," she said recently.

Even if you agree with me that the conference is a good thing, you may be asking yourself why Americans should care about it.

After all, don't American women have more political freedom and economic opportunities than women anywhere else in the world?

There are several reasons why we should care. First, the conference represents a rare opportunity to educate world leaders about the challenges women confront in trying to improve their own lives and the lives of their families.

Improving opportunities for women everywhere is very much in our self-interest. When other countries become more democratic and all citizens more prosperous, our lives are brightened too.

Second, the meeting will give voice to women all over the world, including American women who are trying to raise children on jobs that pay \$4.25 an hour, can't afford health insurance or child care, or are bumping up against a glass ceiling at work.

Third, the gathering will help convey the silent terror endured by millions of women victimized by violence, including violence in their own homes.

Concerns about education, health care, the minimum wage and domestic violence often are written off as "women's issues" unrelated to pressing economic and political challenges.

In fact, these "women's issues" are crucial to the progress of families everywhere.

If women and girls don't flourish, families won't flourish. And if families don't flourish, communities and nations won't flourish.

The United States has long played a leading role in protecting the human rights of all citizens and affording women new opportunities to contribute to the economic lives of their families and the civic life of their communities.

For that reason, the voices of American women must be heard. And they will be heard.

Along with our delegation, thousands of women from the United States are traveling to Beijing, many at their own expense.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 9/2-3/95

Page 3

A group of CPAs from Virginia is making the trip. So are school principals from Maryland, women business owners from Florida, optometrists from California and YWCA leaders from across the country.

Even representatives of the Girl Scouts of America are traveling halfway around the world to take part.

Indeed, the future of all girls is what this conference is about.

COPYRIGHT 1995 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, SEPTEMBER 9-10, 1995**

BEIJING -- "Go to China and stand up for American values."

An American veteran of World War II said these words to me as I was leaving the V-J Day observances in Hawaii last weekend to go to Beijing for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.

A few days later, as I stood before the conference delegates preparing to give a keynote address, the veteran's words came back to me.

Looking out at the sea of faces representing nearly every country in the world, I appreciated even more the privilege of living in a free society.

As an American, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are my birthrights, and they are the birthrights of all Americans. The rights we take for granted are fought for and died for around the world.

In some countries, citizens are not allowed to vote, speak their minds, assemble freely or exercise their faith without fear of persecution, arrest or even torture.

These are what we commonly think of as violations of human rights.

But, as the women's conference taught us, it is also a violation of human rights when, in countries around the world, women and girls are valued less, fed less, fed last, overworked, underpaid, not schooled and beaten up.

If one message rang clear from the conference, it is that women's rights are human rights. And human rights are women's rights.

As I said to the delegates:

It is a violation of human rights when babies are denied food, or drowned, or suffocated, or their spines broken simply because they are born girls.

It is a violation of human rights when women and girls are sold into the slavery of prostitution, sometimes by their own brothers and fathers.

It is a violation of human rights when women are doused with gasoline, set on fire and burned to death because their marriage dowries are deemed too small.

It is a violation of human rights when individual women are raped in their own communities and when thousands of women are subjected to rape as a tactic or prize of war.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 9/9-10/95

Page 2

It is a violation of human rights when a leading cause of death worldwide among women ages 14 to 44 is the violence they are subjected to in their own homes.

It is a violation of human rights when young girls are brutalized by the painful and degrading practice of genital mutilation, which happens to millions of women in Africa.

It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families, and that includes being forced to have abortions or being sterilized against their will.

Today, women bear the brunt of human rights violations around the world. As long as those violations persist -- and discrimination and inequities remain commonplace -- a peaceful and prosperous life is sadly beyond our reach.

One reason we haven't progressed further is that so many women have been afraid to speak up and speak out. As I said to the conference delegates, it is time to break the silence so that women everywhere have a greater say in the future we share.

As different as we may be, there is more that unites than divides us. The conference proved that.

I am grateful that on behalf of our country I had the opportunity to attend this conference with men and women from all over the world who are committed to speaking out and taking action against abuses and injustices that fly in the face of human rights.

If we take bold steps to better the lives of women, we will be taking bold steps to better the lives of children and families too.

Families rely on mothers and wives for emotional support and care. Families rely on women for labor in the home. And increasingly, families rely on women for income needed to raise healthy children and care for other relatives.

The women's conference by itself won't change any lives. But I hope that, by encouraging people to take notice of these issues, it will help lead us to a world in which every woman and girl is given the respect and dignity she deserves.

**COPYRIGHT 1995 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, OCTOBER 21-22, 1995**

Every Thursday, a woman named Miriam volunteers in my staff office at the White House. She is a retired schoolteacher, mother of two, proud grandmother and caring colleague who seldom arrives at work without cakes, cookies, pies or donuts for the staff.

I wish her story ended here. But it doesn't. Like more than 2 million other women in America, Miriam has breast cancer.

She found a lump in her breast five years ago. Since then, she has undergone two surgeries, 33 days of radiation treatments and five separate chemotherapies, including the debilitating sessions she now has every week.

Miriam is not the only woman I know who is battling this disease. In fact, it is hard to find a family in our country -- or a workplace, neighborhood, church group or social club -- that has not been touched by breast cancer.

My mother-in-law, Virginia Kelley, died last year after a four-year struggle with the disease. The mother of one of my best friends was diagnosed a few months ago. Another friend just told me that his sister -- only 41 years old -- has a massive lump as well.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and if you want a chilling statistic, here it is: One in eight women in our country will develop breast cancer during her lifetime, compared to one in 20 a generation ago. And 46,000 American women will die of breast cancer this year.

Those numbers shouldn't be so high. When detected early and treated aggressively, breast cancer does not have to be an automatic death sentence. Every week, I meet women who are longtime breast cancer survivors living full and healthy lives. The key to early detection is a regular mammogram, particularly for women over 65, who account for half of all breast cancer cases.

Younger women should discuss with their doctors whether they should get regular mammograms. When I turned 40, for example, I began having one every year.

In traveling around the country to talk with women about breast cancer, I was startled to learn that only 40 percent of older women, whose mammograms are now covered by Medicare, actually take advantage of this potentially lifesaving benefit.

Why do so many women fail to get mammograms?

Unfortunately, many are reluctant to get screened because they have been told at the procedure is painful or embarrassing. Others don't realize that the benefit is covered under Medicare. Some women lack insurance coverage or the funds to pay for the test. Still others have never been told by their doctors that a mammogram is one of

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 10/21-22/95

Page 2

the most effective ways of detecting malignant breast lumps. Some women have even told me they didn't want to find out if they were sick because they believed there was little they could do about it.

Finally, many women are so busy taking care of their families that they forget to take care of their own health.

I know that a mammogram is not the most comfortable experience. And when you are responsible for kids, a spouse, a job and all the other pressures of daily life, taking the time to get one may seem like too much of a hassle.

But getting a mammogram is a lot more comfortable and a lot more convenient than the pain that comes with cancer and its treatments.

That's why it's important that Medicare continue to cover older women for mammograms every two years and at any other time a doctor believes it is necessary. And it would be a big step forward if communities and local health facilities also offered screenings once a year for women who don't have health insurance or would otherwise be unable to afford a mammogram.

When appropriate, doctors, regardless of their specialty, should encourage women patients to have regular mammograms. Any woman who fears breast cancer should remember that if she does have the disease, she should find out as quickly as possible so that she can begin treatment and get on with living her life.

That's what Miriam does. My staff and I often talk about how much we admire her courage and her selflessness. She tells us that she gets through her treatments by setting personal goals: getting her kitchen remodeled or living to see the birth of her new granddaughter, who was born last month. Now she is looking ahead to her 60th birthday in March.

She says she is no longer afraid of the disease and has no plans to stop her volunteer work. "I will come in until I just can't do it anymore," she said a few days ago. "The chemo hasn't knocked me down yet."

What impresses me most about Miriam is not just her grace or sense of humor but her willingness to talk about breast cancer so that others can learn from her experience.

"Get a mammogram," she frequently reminds us. "It's much less frightening than not having the chance to see your children grow up or your grandchildren graduate from high school. You owe it to yourself and your family."

We should all listen to the words of one so wise.

COPYRIGHT 1995 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TALKING IT OVER**BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON****RELEASE: WEEKEND, DECEMBER 9-10, 1995**

Joyce McCartan's youngest son, Gary, was shot to death by terrorists in his Belfast home one month before his 18th birthday.

His mother had already lost other loved ones to the violent conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. She buried her "baby" in the new suit he had planned to wear at his wedding.

Joyce refused to give in to bitterness. After Gary's death in 1987, she founded the Women's Information Drop-in Centre in a poor neighborhood in Belfast. She continues to work for peace throughout Northern Ireland, bringing Catholic and Protestant women together to share their grief and to find ways to break the cycle of violence in their communities.

I met Joyce during a trip to Belfast with my husband last week. The President went there and to Dublin and London to convey American support for the peace brought to Northern Ireland when Catholic and Protestant leaders agreed to a cease-fire after 25 years of violence and death.

At a small fish and chips restaurant run by members of Joyce's community organization, I met with seven women united in their commitment to honor the memories of the more than 3,200 men, women and children who have died during "The Troubles."

They told me about their hopes and efforts for a lasting and just peace. They believe it can bring economic prosperity and social progress to both Catholic and Protestant communities.

The women I met are not high-level diplomats or professional negotiators. Nor are they elected officials. But it is clear that there would be far less hope for Northern Ireland if women like Joyce had not worked tirelessly among their friends and neighbors to knock down barriers, overcome suspicions and defy history.

Women were and are a driving force behind peace in Northern Ireland.

What unites them is their knowledge that, no matter their background or beliefs, they share the same tragedies: the loss of loved ones to bombs, to assassinations, to random gunfire, and the painful task of preserving families in the midst of poverty and political unrest.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 12/9-10/95

Page 2

Women are dropping ancient grudges that have caused so much pain and terror. They are finding ways to make their faith a source of strength, not division. Mothers are integrating schools and summer camps, bringing together Protestant and Catholic children for the first time and refusing to pass on old traditions of hate, fear and mistrust.

Women in organizations like the one Joyce McCartan founded are working to solve the problems that have caused many young people to resort to violence – poverty, limited education, joblessness and hopelessness.

They have created job training programs for young men and women who do not plan to go to college, counseled families, worked on ways to raise women's self-confidence and civic participation, and helped each other launch small businesses in Belfast's poorest neighborhoods.

"We have worked together over the years from both sides of the community. Nothing separates us," Joyce said.

On the same day that I met these remarkable women, my husband spoke at the Mackie plant in Belfast where Catholic and Protestant workers enter through separate doors but work side by side. Two children, one Catholic and one Protestant, introduced him.

"My first daddy died in the Troubles," said 9-year-old Catherine Hamill. "It was the saddest day of my life. I still think of him. Now it is nice and peaceful. I like having peace and quiet for a change, instead of people shooting and killing. My Christmas wish is that peace and love will last in Ireland forever."

That should be our hope not just for Ireland but for the Middle East, Bosnia, Haiti and the streets in America – anywhere children are at risk of losing their innocence and lives because of violence and hatred. If Joyce McCartan and Catherine Hamill can avoid hatred and bitterness, why can't all of us open our own hearts now and in the days and months ahead?

COPYRIGHT 1995 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**

March 14, 1996

MEMORANDAUM FOR FIRST LADY STAFF

FROM: LISA CAPUTO

RE: HRC COLUMN

Attached is HRC's column for the upcoming week. Enjoy!

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

It's time to declare a cease-fire between the sexes. I don't mean to suggest that men and women are having an all-out war. For the most part, we get along pretty well. It's just that rigid stereotypes sometimes make us enemies instead of allies.

We've all heard disparaging comments about successful career women being inadequate wives and mothers, and stay-at-home moms wasting their talent. We've also heard men being mocked for cooking meals, doing laundry or earning less than their wives.

Women need more respect for the work they do in and out of their homes. Men need more encouragement and support when they try to fulfill their obligations as fathers and husbands.

How many women have urged their husbands to play a greater role in child-rearing, only to criticize their every move, whether it's putting a diaper on wrong or letting the kids stay up too late? I admit, I've done it too. The first time Bill tried to feed Chelsea, I watched him like a hawk.

Fortunately, I learned over the years that my way of handling things wasn't necessarily better just because I was a woman. And I came to realize how lucky I was that my husband enjoyed getting our daughter ready for school, giving her a bath and reading her bedtime stories.

I'm also lucky to have grown up in a family where we children never thought it odd that our parents didn't always fit the typical 1950s family mold.

It's true that in many ways our family was right out of "Father Knows Best." My father worked, and my mother stayed at home to care for me and my brothers. But while my mother cooked most of our daily meals, my father always spent Saturday night serving up his special hamburgers and making us hearty soups. My mother, meanwhile, hit thousands of tennis balls to us and even ran an occasional pass pattern when we played touch football.

A generation later, there is still a lot of confusion about who is supposed to do what when it comes to parental roles.

For the most part, child rearing is still considered "women's work." Even when women with children share the breadwinner role with their husbands, they almost always bear the primary -- and disproportionate -- responsibility for

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON 3/12/96

Page 2

care-giving and homemaking. It is an arrangement that not only gives short shrift to women but also to men and children.

False notions of "masculine" and "feminine" behaviors only serve to paralyze adults even further in their efforts to become the best parents they can be. Is a mother who is ambitious for her children and husband acting "feminine," and a woman who is ambitious on behalf of her own career acting "masculine"? Is a father who soothes a crying child acting "feminine" while one who plays sports with his kids acting "masculine"?

These are all human behaviors that both men and women display, depending on their particular temperaments and circumstances.

If we truly care about strong families, strong communities and strong societies, we have to recognize that men and women can complement each other inside and outside the home. We should not be adversaries but partners in all our efforts, especially those on behalf of our children.

Regardless of which spouse is the main breadwinner or the primary caretaker for children, neither should have to feel guilty about making choices that are right for the family.

A friend of mine married after she was 40 and had a child at 45. Her husband works from home and has assumed the bulk of the child-care and homemaking duties. She, meanwhile, has continued a hectic professional life that frequently keeps her in the office late at night and takes her out of town.

Another of my closest friends chose the opposite path. She quit teaching after the first of her three children was born. Until her youngest son was grown, she devoted herself full-time to her children.

Both women and their husbands say they are leading fulfilling -- if not easy -- lives. To borrow a phrase from anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson, these parents have "composed a life" best suited to their and their family's needs and priorities.

In the end, that is what "women's rights" is all about: Making it possible for women -- and men -- to contribute their unique skills and strengths to their families and society.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

March 12, 1996

CREATORS SYNDICATE LISSA MUSCATINE 1002

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An extraordinary woman is coming to the White House next week: Mary Robinson, the President of Ireland. She is also a mother, a human rights lawyer, a law professor, a force for reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics, and a voice for women all over the world.

I met President Robinson last year when Bill and I were in Dublin. I admire her efforts to legalize contraception and to help women win the right to sit on juries when she was a young legislator in the Irish Senate. In outlining her philosophy, she has quoted the early feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft, who said 200 years ago: "I do not wish women to have power over men but over themselves."

President Robinson's message about women's empowerment echoes the thoughts and words of many other women I have spoken with around the world during the past three and a half years.

Whether they are scholars, poets, historians, journalists, political activists or stay-at-home mothers, women have much to teach each other about the choices and challenges we face as we try to lead integrated lives.

As the writer Deborah Tannen has pointed out in her books about communication and gender, women need to talk, and often they need to talk to each other. It is that need for conversation and direct communication that distinguishes most women from most men.

As women, talking can be our greatest friend. That's why I'm so excited that President Robinson will be in the United States, spreading her message of humanity and opportunity for the people of Ireland and for women everywhere.

It's also why I feel so fortunate to have had face-to-face discussions about women's lives with everyone from the Prime Minister of Norway, to the Empress of Japan, to a destitute mother of 10 children in a dusty village in rural Pakistan.

When the best-selling author Mary Pipher visited me recently at the White House, we talked about our lives and the pressures confronting teen-age girls today.

The poet Maya Angelou teaches me about literature and life, particularly from the perspective of an African-American woman who grew up in Arkansas and is now a citizen of the world.

TALKING IT OVER 6/4/96

Page 2

Rose Styron, the writer and human rights activist, always provokes my thinking about the obligations we owe to men and women whose names are unknown, yet who are suffering for the cause of freedom and democracy.

Historians Doris Kearns Goodwin and Blanche Wiesen Cook both have shared their thoughts about Eleanor Roosevelt, someone I wish I could have talked to in person about the role of First Lady. In fact, I occasionally have imaginary conversations with Mrs. Roosevelt to try to figure out what she would do in my shoes. She usually responds by telling me to buck up or at least to grow skin as thick as a rhinoceros.

Mary Catherine Bateson, an anthropologist and the daughter of Margaret Mead, has written many books, including one called "Composing a Life." She and I have spent hours discussing the ways in which women in different societies attempt to fulfill their responsibilities to their families, jobs and communities.

Jean Houston, an expert on philosophy and mythology, has shared her views with me on everything from the ancient Greeks to the lives of women and children in Bangladesh.

I've even had the pleasure of sitting across the dinner table from Ann Landers, asking advice on matters both trivial and not-so-trivial.

But of all the women I've had the chance to meet, I've probably learned the most from those you've never heard of -- women who have never written a book, appeared on television or been the subject of a newspaper article. From a poor barrio in Managua, Nicaragua, to a grassy field in Indonesia, I've met women who find comfort and unity in telling each other about their children, jobs, families, health, education and all the issues that touch their lives.

I don't always agree with what I hear. What's important is to have the chance to listen to women whose perspectives and ideas may differ from my own so that I can broaden my understanding of women's lives and roles today.

Whoever is doing the talking, the stories we share contribute to our history as women and our understanding of our own time.

I hope we will all make time to talk things over with each other.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

June 4, 1996

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two elite groups of American athletes came to the White House this week. One came to celebrate the ending of an international athletic contest, the other to celebrate the beginning of a new one. On Wednesday, the U.S. Olympic team attended a reception in its honor. The day before, athletes with disabilities from all over the country helped the President kick off the Paralympic torch relay. Though they missed each other by a day, the two groups of athletes have much in common to celebrate.

For weeks, we've watched the Olympic athletes, especially the women, succeed at many competitions in Atlanta. Next week, we will marvel at the accomplishments of the American Paralympians. But few of us recognize that two pieces of federal legislation are in many ways responsible for enriching these performances. Federal laws that ended the unfair exclusion of certain groups, Title IX and the Americans With Disabilities Act, have made a world of difference.



Just think of all the American women we applauded: Dot Richardson, who hit a two-run homer for a U.S. gold in the first-ever Olympic softball tournament; the women's track-and-field relay teams who took gold; and the members of our gold-medal-winning women's basketball team.

Last Saturday, the President, Chelsea and I called the U.S. women's soccer team to congratulate them on their gold medal. Talking all at once through a speakerphone, they told us how thrilled -- and tired -- they were after the game. Their enthusiasm was infectious; and Chelsea, who played in a soccer league during much of her childhood, was especially excited to talk to them.

These women are just a few of those who would not have made it into the Olympics and our hearts if they had not had the opportunity to train on high school and college teams that were strengthened -- or even created -- after Title IX's passage in 1972.



That law requires all schools that receive federal funding to offer women students equal opportunities to participate in organized athletics. In other words, it required schools that offer men's sports to develop women's teams as well.

In 1972, just 295,000 girls competed in high school sports; 32,000 competed on the college level. The numbers have grown to about 2 million and 110,540 respectively. While the majority of these women will never see an Olympic medal, an All-American citation or even an athletic scholarship, they've had the opportunity to learn what their male classmates learned for years: teamwork, discipline and the sheer joy of athletic competition.

At its heart, Title IX isn't just about athletics. It's about giving every person in this country a chance to fulfill his or her God-given potential. That's what the ADA is all about as well. Title IX and the ADA are landmarks in our country's continuing effort to make our society more just and more inclusive.

Where Title IX opened gyms, playing fields and swimming pools to women, the ADA has helped millions of Americans gain greater access to town halls, workplaces, transportation systems and movie theaters.

And just as the Olympics showed the world what American women can do when given the opportunity to make the most of their abilities, next week's Paralympics will demonstrate what people with disabilities can accomplish when they, too, have a chance to fulfill their potential.

About 4,000 athletes with physical disabilities from some 120 countries will gather in Atlanta, just as their Olympic counterparts did. They will compete in events such as basketball, judo, tennis, swimming, yachting, track and field, and power-lifting. The Paralympics began in Rome in 1960 and are held every Olympic year, but this will be the first time they are televised.

Through these games, we'll meet a new set of heroes. We'll meet athletes who, despite their disabilities, will post race times that are not so far off Olympic marks. And we'll meet athletes like Diane Straub, an above-the-knee amputee who is a competitive swimmer and medical student; and Randy Snow, a wheelchair tennis and basketball player who's as graceful as any Dream Team member on the court. Both will be participating in the Paralympic torch relay.

The flame that lit the Olympic Games where so many women shone and the flame that is on its way to the Paralympics symbolize much more than athletic competition. They represent the talent and dedication of people who took advantage of the opportunities we all worked to make available to them.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

August 6, 1996

**TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

A year ago, thousands of people from around the world gathered in Beijing with a simple message: "Women's rights are human rights -- and human rights are women's rights."

It was a call to action, meant to galvanize citizens as well as nations. By the time the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women had ended, 189 nations had agreed to act on issues affecting women and their families -- everything from education and health care to political participation and access to credit.

Today, in country after country, we see the fruits of Beijing -- in new laws, expanded rights and changing attitudes about the role of women in society.

Women in Namibia now have equal rights with men in marriage. Women in Fiji can now work past 6:00 in the evening. Women in Nepal may soon be allowed to own property. Women in Guatemala now can take advantage of scholarships to study political science at the national university. Women in India and Cameroon may soon be better represented in government because of efforts to increase the number of women elected to office in those countries.

In Ecuador, new laws stipulate that a married man can no longer buy or sell family assets without his wife's consent. In Colombia, new laws protect women from domestic violence. In the Philippines, the government has pledged to impose tougher penalties for the crime of trafficking in women. In Brazil, the health ministry is providing free breast and uterine exams to help fight cancer. In Egypt, the practice of genital mutilation is now banned in government health facilities. And in China, plans are underway to help rural women escape poverty by teaching them vocational skills and literacy.

Here in the United States, the Beijing conference has ushered in changes as well.

By the time the American delegation had returned home, the President had set up a special council to make sure that the Beijing agenda didn't die on the vine. The council brings together representatives from each federal agency to develop policies that support the advancement of women and girls in the United States.

TALKING IT OVER 10/1/96

Page 2

The results are impressive: The federal government is doing more to toughen laws against domestic violence and improve enforcement and prevention of that tragic crime. There are initiatives underway to expand housing opportunities for women, protect them from environmental hazards, and increase research and treatment of diseases like breast cancer. Federal agencies also are encouraging financial institutions to make loans to women to start their own businesses and asking companies to adopt family-friendly policies in the workplace.

But Beijing didn't just inspire action on the part of the federal government.

Last weekend, Americans held conferences at more than 450 sites around the country to talk about activities in their own communities. For two hours, some of the U.S. delegates and I were able to share insights and experiences via satellite with audiences gathered at these sites.

What we learned is that the energy and excitement of Beijing is rippling out across our country -- to state houses, town halls and community organizations.

In Woodbridge, N.J., volunteers are working with the Mayor's office to develop a domestic violence help-line. In Maryland, women in the state legislature are using the Beijing platform to guide their legislative agenda. Mayors from Cleveland to Oakland are working to expand opportunities for girls and women.

One of my favorite examples comes from Louisville, Ky., where students at a local high school put on a day-long conference in which boys explored negative images of women in the media.

Elsewhere, woman scientists are renewing their commitments to mentor younger women in the sciences, and high school girls are launching their own letter-writing campaigns to protest sexual harassment on the Internet. And in San Antonio, college students -- men and women -- held a march to protest domestic violence in their community.

I'm convinced that Beijing was a historic step forward to achieving equal rights for women and girls here at home and around the world. Thanks to the conference, and the momentum it generated, we are moving closer to the day when women's rights and human rights are viewed as one and the same thing.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

October 1, 1996

**TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

When I was 14, I dreamed of becoming an astronaut. Inspired by Alan Shephard's pioneering 15-minute trip into space, I wrote NASA to find out what I needed to do to see the stars up close. The space agency thanked me for my interest but said that women were not being considered for the job.

I doubt that I was the only girl to receive a disappointing letter from NASA. And I know that this past spring and summer, I wasn't the only woman who found her old dreams of space travel orbiting Earth with Shannon Lucid in a 136-ton space station.

For six months, I was among millions of men and women who silently -- and sometimes loudly -- cheered each time we heard that Dr. Lucid had broken another space record or when we read reports of her good-humor, stamina and quiet strength during her stay on the Russian space station Mir.

We chuckled as she described how she and her two Russian colleagues looked forward to Jell-O for dessert on Sundays. Our admiration grew as she gamely took the news that her return to Earth would be delayed by six weeks. And it was refreshing for all of us to see an American display so much grace and civility in the close quarters of a space station when those attributes sometimes seem to be in short supply on Earth.

I wish I could have been at Kennedy Space Center last week to see Dr. Lucid as she defied expectations and walked off the space shuttle Atlantis on her own two feet. (Scientists had thought that after 188 days in the weightlessness of space, she would have been too weak to stand, much less walk.) I wish I could have seen her face when she opened the large box of M&Ms, the candy she had missed so much on Mir, that the President had sent her as a welcome-home present. And I wish I could have been with Bill the next day in Houston when he paid tribute to Dr. Lucid for setting the record for the longest flight by any American -- and any woman -- in space.

Like many Americans of my generation, the space program captured my imagination when I was still very young. After the Soviet Union launched Sputnik and became the first country to travel into space, I remember President Eisenhower urging all of us schoolchildren to study more math and science. A successful space program, he said, would require many talented and visionary scientists, engineers and mathematicians. I took his and later President Kennedy's words to heart, feeling that I could play a part in preparing our country for space exploration and the future.

TALKING IT OVER 10/8/96

Page 2

My brothers and I followed the space program closely. We were glued to our black-and-white television set and pored over the morning papers each time the Mercury astronauts blasted into space. And like many Americans, I remember where I was when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon. (I was washing dishes at a National Park hotel in Alaska.)

As an adult, I continued to share in every triumph, disappointment and milestone in our space program -- from Sally Ride's historic shuttle ride to the Challenger explosion, which reminded all of us of the great risk our astronauts take each time they travel into space, to this summer's announcement that there may have been life on Mars.

Perhaps no recent achievement resonates more with American women and girls than Dr. Lucid's. Here's a woman who refused to let prevailing stereotypes limit her interests and ambitions. When she was 13, she wrote an essay about her dream of becoming a rocket scientist. Her teacher laughed at the idea, saying that if there were such a profession, women would never be part of it. But Dr. Lucid didn't abandon her interest in science -- or space. She learned to pilot an airplane. While raising a family, she got a doctorate in biochemistry.

And, when NASA decided to end its single-sex policy, Dr. Lucid was ready -- and qualified. She joined Sally Ride in the first group of American woman astronauts. Today, Dr. Lucid is a veteran of five shuttle missions and one of America's most experienced astronauts.

While there are still many more frontiers of work and space to explore and conquer, Dr. Lucid is living proof to all of us -- and especially our daughters -- that the sky need not be the limit of our dreams and ambitions.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

October 8, 1996

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

When I was growing up, my sense of Australia was based on fanciful images of the outback. I envisioned wide, open spaces similar in look and feel to the American Wild West but with lots of koalas and kangaroos. Over the years, I've gained a broader and more accurate view of Down Under, thanks in part to many wonderful Australian writers and filmmakers whose works have captivated me.

Now I am in Australia for the first time, having arrived by plane with the President a few nights ago. We landed on a glorious spring evening, and I was reminded of a passage I had read in "The Road from Coorain," a memoir about growing up in the bush. The author, Jill Ker Conway, describes returning to Australia in her mid-20s after a long sojourn in Europe. From the plane, she looks down on Sydney and sees the beauty of the harbor, the golden beaches and the "grey-green city" lying at the edge of a continent.

At that moment, she finally understands Australia's unique orientation in the world. The country, she writes, looks "across the vast expanse of the Pacific, not to Europe but to Japan and continental Asia." Although it retains its ties to England and the West, Australia is also connected both geographically and economically to Asia.

The outdated term "Far East" brings to mind distant outposts on the margins of civilization. In fact, Southeast Asia and the South Pacific are among the most dynamic, vibrant regions of the world. They will have great influence on global economic and social progress in the 21st century, particularly the progress of women.

On this trip, I will be spending a few days here and then will travel to the Philippines and Thailand, where I will have the chance to see firsthand what is happening in each country to improve conditions for women and promote their involvement in civic life. In the Philippines, for example, President Ramos is working to protect the rights of Philippine women who are hired as domestic workers overseas. The Thai government has just instituted new restrictions on child prostitution and the selling of young girls to brothels. And here in Australia, efforts are under way to ensure equal pay for equal work.

In some ways, Australia has been a pioneer. In 1902, almost two decades before women's suffrage was enacted in the United States, Australian women won the right to vote. Barriers still exist in many professions and in the workplace, but Australia has recognized the necessity of a social safety net for women, children and families.

Not only does Australia have universal health care, it has a wide network of government-supported child care centers. Maternity benefits and parental leave are generous. And child support enforcement is taken seriously.

So are efforts to stop domestic violence and break the glass ceiling that prevents women from being promoted in the workplace. While Australia, like many other countries, is grappling with how to protect critical social programs in an era of budget restraints, women are gaining ground in daily life here.

Being in Australia for a few days reminds me that wherever I go around the world, I see examples of women seeking to gain their rightful place in society -- in the public sphere of government, the private sphere of the marketplace and the individual sphere of family and community. In country after country, women are showing that their concerns are not marginal to the political, economic, social and civic life of their nations.

Whether it is Corazon Aquino, who led the peaceful People's Revolution in the Philippines a decade ago, or less famous women in Thailand who are working to give young girls alternatives to lives of prostitution, or mothers in America's suburbs who are concerned about improving their local schools and combating crime, women are making their voices heard in ways large and small.

I'm grateful for the chance to hear what they are saying -- and to be part of the growing chorus.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

November 19, 1996

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

I am writing this week's column on Air Force One, still in the pale blue evening suit I wore to the state dinner hosted by the King and Queen of Thailand at the Grand Palace in Bangkok. My head is spinning -- and not just because it's past midnight and we're about to fly halfway around the world to get home in time for Thanksgiving. I'm mentally digesting the memorable experiences I had in Australia, the Philippines and Thailand.

I'll never forget my first sight of the Opera House in the harbor, in Sydney, Australia, the solemn splendor of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, or the visual power of the aboriginal art. I'll never forget the feel of a kangaroo's fur or the expression in the eyes of a koala bear named Chelsea, the rainbow colors of the Great Barrier Reef through my snorkeling mask, or the sounds of friendly Australian voices saying "G'day" -- just like in the movies!

In the Philippines, we stayed in the MacArthur Suite in the Manila Hotel, which was Gen. MacArthur's home after he returned during World War II. In one room, there is a collection of memorabilia, including a display on the wall of all his medals and decorations. I walked around the room imagining the history that was made there. Meanwhile, history was also being made at the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting my husband attended. Manila was alight with Christmas decorations to welcome the heads of state who had come to discuss trade issues.

At the city's new cultural center, I felt the warmth and friendship of the crowd of more than 12,000 people -- most of them women. I spoke about progress being made around the world to protect women's rights and applauded the actions taken in the Philippines to promote family planning and reduce domestic violence.

After Manila, I headed to Northern Thailand, where I planned to see two projects designed to educate girls and protect them from child prostitution. When I landed at Chiang Rai, I was greeted by a troupe of 200 dancers in traditional Thai costumes and hundreds of children waving American and Thai flags.

The first project I visited, Thai Women of Tomorrow, pays families a small stipend to permit their daughters to attend school. As I stood in front of the rows of schoolgirls dressed in uniforms of white blouses and blue skirts, I thought about how young they were and how thousands of girls their age all over the world are denied not only the opportunity to learn but the chance to be young before they grow old.

In the hills above Chiang Rai, I visited a hill-tribe village where some of the students are from. Hill-tribe girls, whose families are desperately poor, usually illiterate and frequently stateless, are especially vulnerable to exploitation. I spoke with several girls, who were clothed in their native dress, and their parents, who explained how they had decided education and job training could prepare their daughters for better and longer-lasting careers than potentially deadly lives as prostitutes.

When I returned to the airport, the full moon was up and the dancers and children were still there. Music filled the air, and the tarmac was a sea of dancing lights. The dancers had strapped candles to their delicate wrists, and children waved paper lanterns.

As our plane approached Chiang Mai, Thailand's second largest city, the sky was full of tiny red stars, which turned out to be hot-air paper lanterns launched as part of the annual Festival of Lights held during the last full moon of the lunar year. It is a three-day celebration of fireworks, lanterns and candle-lit floats made of banana leaves and flowers. The Thai people believe they can load the sins of the past year and wishes for the future onto these floats. After asking for forgiveness, they then cast the floats off into a river or lake. I lit one and placed it in the Ping River, where it joined the procession.

I thought about forgiveness and hope the next day when I visited the second project of my trip, the New Life Center. Run by Rev. Lauren Bethel, an American missionary, the center gives girls rescued from prostitution a second chance at life. I also met girls from the House of Love, a shelter for former prostitutes dying from AIDS. One 18-year-old girl came in a wheelchair. She had been sold as a maid when she was 10 and then forced into prostitution. Even after she became HIV-positive, she had to keep working. Only after she became too sick with AIDS to function was she taken to the hospital. As I knelt beside her, I could see the skin stretched tightly across her face. She tried to speak but could not be heard. She was not expected to live out the week.

Despite witnessing the ravages of AIDS and the cruel reality of how girls are still being exploited, I came away from the center hopeful and heartened. I was encouraged by the commitment of private individuals, like Rev. Bethel, the organizations that support such work and the growing willingness of governments to combat sexual exploitation and the economic and social problems that lead to it. The Thai government has enacted legislation and adopted a plan to end child prostitution. The United States has passed a law permitting the prosecution of any citizen who engages in such illegal activities. No one who saw the face of that dying girl in the wheelchair could doubt the urgency of persuading more countries to take similar steps.

So, as I fly home to my daughter, I want to give thanks for her and for all our children -- and wish all of you a happy Thanksgiving.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

November 26, 1996

**TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The pregnant woman wore an alpaca shawl over her blouse and full skirt, the traditional Indian dress in Bolivia. She looked about 35 and was attending a prenatal class at a health clinic I visited this week in the Bolivian capital, La Paz. She was nursing a 3-month-old baby and expecting her eighth child, who she hoped would be her last.

I was in Bolivia to attend the Sixth Conference of Wives of Heads of State and Government of the Americas. Women from countries throughout the Western Hemisphere got together to talk about strategies to eliminate measles, promote education reform and improve maternal health in our region.

Bolivia, a country of majestic beauty in the heart of South America, was an auspicious location for such a discussion. More women die in Bolivia during pregnancy and childbirth than in any other country in South America. But in the face of this human tragedy, Bolivia has become a model of how one nation can respond to the crisis of maternal mortality by galvanizing the government, non-governmental organizations and the medical establishment to launch a nationwide family-planning campaign.

In a country where half of all expecting mothers go through pregnancy and childbirth alone -- without medical attention of any kind -- Bolivia's aggressive effort to educate women about their own health and their options for childbearing is resulting in safer pregnancies, stronger families and fewer abortions. Without access to family planning, women in Bolivia -- and in many developing nations -- often turn in desperation to illegal, unsafe abortions that can end in death or serious injury. Deaths from abortion complications account for half of all maternal deaths in Bolivia.

As Bolivia has ably demonstrated, voluntary family planning teaches women about the benefits of spacing children several years apart, breast-feeding, good nutrition, prenatal and postpartum visits and safe deliveries. It also decreases the number of abortions.

Bolivia's success at preventing mothers from dying and lowering abortion rates has been possible, in part, because of help from the United States and other countries. The U.S. Agency for International Development has provided financial and technical assistance to help Bolivia establish a network of primary health care clinics.

The clinic I visited in La Paz is one that the United States helped start. Called PROSALUD (which, loosely translated, means "for the good of health" in Spanish), the clinic has doctors and nurses who offer round-the-clock prenatal, obstetric and pediatric services, as well as counseling about family planning in a poor neighborhood of 15,000 people. In the first six months of this year, the clinic staff provided 2,200 medical consultations, delivered 200 babies, registered 700 new family-planning users and immunized 2,500 children.

There are obvious benefits of such a program to Bolivian women, children and families, but health and family-planning services also help alleviate poverty and contribute to the economic stability of a democratic ally in our hemisphere. Yet opponents of foreign assistance and particularly of family planning in Congress are trying to eviscerate U.S. funding for programs like the one I saw at PROSALUD. Some argue that the United States has no national interest in the health and well-being of other countries' citizens. Others mistakenly suggest that family planning is being used to encourage -- rather than decrease -- abortions. In fact, our government has prohibited funding of any overseas project that promotes abortion since 1973.

Ignoring this, Congress last year approved draconian cuts in family-planning assistance amounting to a 35 percent reduction in funds. To add insult to injury, the cuts were accompanied by new restrictions that delayed delivery of aid for the first nine months of the fiscal year.

Similar harsh cuts and delays are included in the current budget, meaning that many organizations could again be denied assistance for months and then receive it only in monthly installments.

According to a recent analysis by five population organizations, the funding cuts alone will result in an increase of 1.6 million abortions, more than 8,000 maternal deaths, and 134,000 infant deaths in developing countries.

Family-planning campaigns at work in Bolivia and elsewhere represent sensible, cost-effective and long-term strategies for improving women's health, strengthening families and lowering the rate of abortion. My husband's administration remains committed to the continuation of these investments. And I will do everything I can to ensure that U.S. support for these initiatives continues. If you share my concern, I hope you will add your voice to mine and give all women everywhere the same opportunities for their lives we take for granted in ours.

COPYRIGHT 1996 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

December 3, 1996

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

I first heard about a small explosion near the Planned Parenthood headquarters in downtown Washington, D.C., a few hours before the Vice President, Tipper Gore and I were scheduled to speak nearby at a luncheon honoring women who have led our nation's efforts on behalf of family planning and protecting a woman's right to choose.

The explosion occurred on the 24th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision Roe vs. Wade and just one week after bombs had exploded at family planning clinics in Atlanta and Tulsa.

By the time I arrived at the Mayflower Hotel at noon, it seemed likely that the Washington blast was an accident and not a willful act of violence. We later learned that the timing and location of the explosion were indeed coincidental.

Still, the tension generated by one small incident reminded me of the degree to which emotion has shaped the abortion debate. Now, after years of fiery rhetoric, finger pointing and heated recriminations, it's time for people of good faith -- on all sides of the abortion issue -- to lower the decibel level and seek common ground.

As I told those gathered at the luncheon in Washington, abortion is always a difficult and delicate subject. I have met people who passionately disagree with each other on abortion but nonetheless recognize the complexities and anguish that women may confront in certain circumstances.

The key is to find ways to respect our differences, expand the dialogue and join together with those who do not share extremism as their rallying cry. By doing this, we can continue to make progress toward a common goal of reducing abortions, lowering the rate of teen-age pregnancy and giving women opportunities to make the choices that are best for themselves and their families.

I believe that my husband's formulation on abortion is still the right one: Abortion should be legal, safe and rare. Over the past four years, his administration has worked hard to affirm the legality and safety of the practice as well as to encourage attitudes and values that will make abortion rarer than ever before. And we should all be heartened that the rate of legal abortions in the United States has fallen to its lowest level in two decades.

One of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to reduce abortions is to promote family planning -- here and abroad. We now have ample evidence that in countries where family planning is available to women, the rate of abortion declines, the spacing of children increases and the health of mothers and their children improves.

The importance of family planning as an alternative to abortion hit home to me recently when I was reading a book about the lives of women in countries around the world. One

woman from Russia described how, after marrying her husband, she had two children and four abortions. Abortion, she suggested, was the only means she had to limit the size of her family. Family planning was simply not available.

Where family planning is not an option, women often resort in desperation to unsafe practices that threaten their health and the well-being of their families. A few years ago, I visited a maternal hospital in one of the poorest regions of Brazil. Half of the patients had been admitted to deliver their babies. The other half were there for complications resulting from self-induced or back-alley abortions. The state Minister of Health explained to me in a public meeting later that day, "We want to give poor women the same information and access to family planning that well-to-do women have always had."

That should be our goal in the United States as well -- both at home and in our foreign policy.

As Vice President Gore said at the National Abortion Rights Action League luncheon last week: "How can we as Americans, schooled in the deepest respect for a proper relationship between the individual and the awesome power of the state, say that the government of the United States of America with all of its resources, all of its distance and insensitivity to these fragile and complex circumstances pressing in upon that individual woman ... must come in and order her to do what it has decided is the right thing and not her?"

The Vice President's words are a reminder that in many countries decisions about reproduction continue to be imposed on women against their will. In China, which I visited in 1995, I spoke out against policies of forced abortion and sterilization that allow the government to decide the size of every woman's family. Some months later, I was in Romania, where the previous Communist regime had a policy requiring every woman to have five children. Some women described to me the degradation and humiliation they felt each month when they were taken, as part of their work units, to local hospitals and forcibly examined to determine whether or not they were pregnant. Those who were pregnant were then monitored by secret police to make sure they gave birth and didn't abort the pregnancy.

What we have tried to do in promoting choice in our country is to say that decisions about reproduction are among the most difficult and most intimate a woman must make. And each woman must be able to make them in private consultation with her conscience, her God, her family and her physician.

We will never reach unanimity on an issue as complex and controversial as abortion. But if we start talking to each other -- and listening to what each other has to say -- we may discover that we have more in common than we think.

COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

January 29, 1997

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

I always enjoy meeting other working mothers because I love to share stories about raising children while holding down jobs. So I was delighted to host a luncheon at the White House this week honoring women who have successfully combined work and family life.

Some of our nation's most accomplished working women were there, including Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick (who had to leave early to attend her daughter's ballet recital); Pat Summitt, head coach of the University of Tennessee Lady Volunteers basketball team; Jill Barad, the CEO of Mattel Inc.; Elaine Pagels, a renowned scholar and professor at Princeton University; and other leading women from the fields of law, entertainment, journalism, business and politics.

Also on hand were some working mothers whose names you wouldn't know. They aren't famous or well-to-do. And they aren't in positions of national influence. They represent the vast majority of women in America who struggle every day to fulfill their obligations at home and on the job, often with meager resources and little help. I felt that women like Tina Garcia deserved to be honored, too.

Tina grew up on welfare and was a single mother for eight years. She couldn't afford child care, so she improvised by working during school hours or bringing her children to work. She also shared duties with another single mother, who didn't drive. Tina would run errands and do grocery shopping in exchange for baby-sitting. Today, this mother of four runs a thriving real estate company in Virginia.

In recent years, women like Tina Garcia have become a driving force in our country -- politically, socially and economically. That's because their concerns -- finding affordable child care, spending more time with their children, being valued at work, being compensated fairly and having flexible leave time for family emergencies -- are real-life issues confronting tens of millions of working mothers across our country.

You may remember that many of these were summed up during the presidential campaign as the "feminization of politics." I think that's an unfortunate term. After all, most fathers worry about whether their children are in safe, dependable and affordable child care. Most men want to be able to take time off

when a family member is gravely ill. Most sons want to ensure that their elderly parents have health care coverage.

Instead of the "feminization of politics," I prefer to think of this phenomenon as the "humanization of politics." What we have seen being played out in the political arena is how people's personal concerns can become political if they use their voices -- and their votes -- to define them.

The gender gap we hear so much about is simply a measure of how women, who are experts on the hazards and vicissitudes of life, vote their self-interest and their values. In so doing, they deliver a clear message that the issues they care about deserve to be on the front burner of national politics.

While political scientists often discuss realpolitik, the balance of power among nations, working mothers are saying that national politics must also be about real-life politik -- about how we live and work together and how we achieve balance in our lives.

Regardless of our political affiliation or where we stand on any particular issue or even where we come down on the larger question of how we attain a balance of power in our own lives, we must acknowledge that much is at stake for women collectively in this debate.

Will public and private institutions help empower women with the tools they need to expand their choices and take responsibility for their lives? And by that, I mean, will businesses initiate policies that make work more family-friendly? Will employers value women by paying them equal pay for equal work?

Will individual women be respected for the choices they make about family, work and personal growth -- and will they be able to make those choices free of the burden of other people's and society's expectations? Will we stop pigeonholing women and invoking stereotypes that limit their potential? Will we admit that there is no formula for being a successful or fulfilled woman in today's society -- that one can choose full-time motherhood and homemaking or be committed to work outside the home without marriage or children or, like most of us today, balance work and family responsibilities?

Whether they are CEOs or minimum-wage workers, most women are doing everything they can to do right by their families and their jobs. Now it's time for society to let them know that their choices are supported and respected.

COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

February 11, 1997

TALKING IT OVER

BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Whenever I travel abroad, as I did recently through Africa, I wish that I could take every American -- particularly our young people -- with me to see the places I visit and the people I meet. I believe Americans would return home, as my companions and I did, more grateful for the blessings of life that we too often take for granted and more aware of the experiences and feelings all human beings share.

Of the many memories I will carry with me after two weeks in sub-Saharan Africa, one is of the extraordinary women I met. In country after country, I saw women building the foundations of democracy and civil society, often against great odds. I saw village women passing on health care advice in rural Senegal, a teacher providing English training to her students in Soweto, poor women constructing houses for their families outside Capetown, refugees struggling for survival in the aftermath of civil war in Rwanda, government leaders speaking out for women's rights in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Uganda, and women who led the fight for freedom in Eritrea.

The women I met are paving the way to progress in Africa. And they are reminding us that, no matter where we live, we have a stake in each other's futures as citizens of the world.

One of the greatest challenges to women in Africa is maintaining peace and stability in countries long ravaged by war and civil strife. Women suffer the greatest burdens in such conflicts, and they form the majority of Africa's refugees.

In Arusha, Tanzania, I visited the International War Crimes Tribunal investigating the genocide in Rwanda. Because of concerns about its effectiveness, the Tribunal is being reorganized, and a new chief prosecutor, Justice Louise Arbour of Canada, has been appointed. Justice Arbour is focused on prosecuting the crimes of sexual violence against women that marked the wars in both Rwanda and Bosnia.

Although I was unable to go to Rwanda, I met with a delegation of Rwandan women in Kampala, Uganda. In soft-spoken tones, they told me of the horrors they had endured. One young woman described how she attempted to keep her arm intact after it had been nearly severed by a machete. Eventually, because of infection, she had to remove her own arm. As she showed me her wound, I was told that there is a desperate shortage of prosthetic limbs for such victims. I received a photo album of grisly pictures of the results of the violence -- bones, skulls, dazed survivors, orphaned

children. But my most vivid mental pictures are of the faces of the women I met and their looks of determination to help rebuild their ravaged country.

I thought of those refugees while meeting with the group of Eritrean women who endured a 30-year war for the independence of the youngest nation in Africa. Most had been among the freedom fighters who waged that war. Many had started fighting as teen-agers or while in their early 20s. Now, they want to make up for all that time by helping start schools and health clinics, by training other freedom fighters for civilian jobs and by ensuring that the women who helped secure independence are not, in peace, made dependent again.

Although I spent most of my trip meeting with Africans who represent that continent's future, I spent a few hours in one of the world's most important archeological sites, the Olduvai Gorge in northern Tanzania. American and Tanzanian archaeologists, geologists and anthropologists, whose research is supported by the U.S. and Tanzanian governments, are continuing ground-breaking work on human evolution begun by the late Mary Leakey and her husband, Louis. The Leakeys spent decades digging in the gorge and unearthed some of our most important discoveries about the origins of the human species.

To get to the site, we went by Land Rover from the Ngorogoro Crater. We arrived on a hot morning at a place that looks something like a large, dusty quarry. Walking through this archaeological gold mine was nothing short of extraordinary. It seemed that with every step, my guide, Rutgers University professor Robert Blumenschine, pointed out a fossil bone or flakes of quartz that the earliest humans could have used for tools. In the walls of the gorge, we could see layers of geological development, which correspond with biological changes in the development of humankind.

As much as the reservoir of scientific information the gorge is yielding, I was moved by the message of humanity embedded in its walls. The Olduvai Gorge offers a lesson that no matter how different human beings are on the surface, ultimately we come from the same place. We share a common ancestral home. And in the end, no matter our gender, the tone of our skin or the God we believe in -- no matter the wide oceans or expanses of land that separate us -- we are part of the same human family.

What science is telling us, and what I was reminded of at every stop on my trip, is that we all have a stake in Africa's future, just as we all have a connection to its past.

COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

April 2, 1997

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bill and I spent a week in Mexico for our honeymoon. Like most American tourists, we reveled in Mexico's rich history, lively culture, warm people and great food. (And like many Mexicans, we also honeymooned with our parents.)

We were particularly excited about returning to Mexico last week, this time for an official state visit that also took us to summits of Central American leaders in Costa Rica and Caribbean leaders in Barbados. Each stop reminded us how much this vast region has changed in the last two decades and how its future is inextricably tied to our own.

We are connected to our Latin American neighbors by both geography and history: The United States now claims the fifth largest Hispanic population in the world. But we are also bound together by technology, trade and the forces of global economic integration. And we share many of the same concerns, from drugs, crime and environmental decay to strengthening democracy throughout the region.

For decades, Central America was torn apart by civil wars, bloody coups, repression and poverty. With the historic signing of the peace accords in Guatemala in December 1996, the region is finally free of war and conflict. Democracy now exists in every country in Central America. Political and economic reforms are leading to new hope for lasting peace and increasing prosperity from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean.

From the moment I landed in Merida on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula to the day we left Bridgetown, Barbados, eight days later, I could see that many men and women are responsible for brightening the prospects for our hemisphere's future. The people of Merida welcomed me with a program of music and folkloric dance staged before one of the oldest churches in Mexico. Choruses sang in Spanish and Mayan, the language of the ancient culture that produced great pyramids like those I visited the next day at Uxmal.

I met with several hundred women from across the country, many direct descendants of the Mayans, Aztecs and other Indigenous people of MesoAmerica. Thanks to small loans they have received through microcredit projects, they have been able to earn a living for themselves and their families selling goods as varied as ceramics, honey, coffee, hammocks and clothing.

These women, who might otherwise have been left on the outskirts of opportunity, have discovered their potential to take control of their lives and their futures, not through a handout but through their own hard work. At the same time, they are helping preserve their indigenous heritage, giving people the world over a chance to enjoy the products they create and becoming better integrated into the society and economy of Mexico.

I saw the same tremendous entrepreneurial spirit in Costa Rica at a forum sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the InterAmerican Development Bank. One woman had started a thriving business in rare orchids; another makes clothing for children; and one man described how he and his father used small loans to become organic farmers.

Most memorable, however, was an Indian woman from Guatemala who proudly told a large crowd that she had started out selling mangoes on the street when she was 12. With microloans, she expanded her line of goods and now employs others. Her profits enabled her to send her children to school, including a son to the University of North Carolina.

Economic participation, which microenterprise ensures for countless poor men and women around the world, is a human right essential to the success of any democracy. But so too are all human rights, which have often been violated in Latin America, sometimes with the encouragement or indifference of my own country. To highlight the U.S. commitment to human rights, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and I visited the Institute for Human Rights in Costa Rica, which has dedicated itself to ensuring political and legal rights.

Throughout the region, men and women have risked -- and lost -- their lives to fight for freedom and social justice. Fortunately, their work and sacrifice contributed to Central America's movement away from the repressive regimes and human rights abuses of years past. Still, the transition to democracy remains incomplete -- particularly when it comes to the rights of women. Seated around a simple table at the Institute, women from Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador reported about the obstacles they face, ranging from violence in and out of their homes to a lack of laws protecting them.

From Central America, we traveled to the Caribbean, a region from which many Americans trace their roots -- and to which many Americans return for vacations. Countries there have been particularly hard hit by changes in the global economy. At a regional microenterprise forum, I announced a grant that, as part of the President's initiative to help the region, will expand Caribbean microcredit projects.

Luckily, the trip was not all business and meetings. Bill and I were able to spend one wonderful day relaxing on Barbados, which reminded us of our honeymoon. We slept, read, sunned and swam. He graduated from crutches to cane. And we came back refreshed and more convinced of the importance of strengthening our ties with our friends and neighbors in this hemisphere.

COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

May 13, 1997

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. article	HRC Talking it Over article re: fax number [partial] (2 pages)	02/12/1998	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Shirley Sagawa
OA/Box Number: 24339

FOLDER TITLE:

Talking it Over [Columns of the First Lady] [Binder] [4]

2013-0124-S

rc1077

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A man once asked me what I meant when I said, "Women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights."

I asked him to think of all the rights he as a man enjoyed and apply them to women. What would it be like if his rights were taken away? What if he were not allowed to vote? Or inherit property? Or go to school? Or drive? Or hold a job outside his home? In America, it's easy to lose sight of the importance of human rights, because our freedoms are guaranteed for both man and women.

When I listen to the stories of women around the world, I am haunted by the sights, sounds and emotions of those who have been left out of the circle of human rights. A young woman forced into prostitution, dying of AIDS. A woman in a refugee camp, holding her children as they die in her arms. Women raped as a tactic of war or the victims of domestic abuse in their own homes. Women forced to have children in some countries, forced to abort them in others.

These women understand the importance of human rights because they've lived without them. They believe human rights are as essential to life as air or water. They know, in spite of everything they are told by culture and tradition, that these are the rights of the children of God.

This week marks the beginning of a year-long observation of these rights -- an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the cause of equal rights for all humanity.

It was on Dec. 10, 1948, in the aftermath of the unspeakable horrors of World War II, that the United Nations General Assembly, prodded in large measure by Eleanor Roosevelt, chair of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It defines basic human rights, from life, liberty and security to freedom from slavery and torture.

In a controversial decision, historic for its time, the Declaration stated that all of the enumerated rights belong to men and women equally. Yet, even today -- 50 years later -- full economic, social and political opportunities for women remain too often an elusive goal.

To be sure, we have made progress. Yet, in many places, the suffering of women continues, explained away as a "cultural phenomenon." Inheritance rights for women fall behind those of men. Access by women to equal

TALKING IT OVER 12/9/97

Page 2

educational opportunities is limited, and illiteracy rates remain disproportionately high. In some countries, only men enjoy the right to vote, and women are trafficked as domestic servants, sweatshop workers and prostitutes.

There is no easy answer that will suddenly free women from these conditions. But, as we embark on this commemorative year, and as we approach the new century, it's time to bring all human beings into the full protection of this extraordinary promise.

How can we expect to make progress when women make up half of the world's population yet remain disproportionately poor? Women and children are 80 percent of the world's 23 million refugees. Two-thirds of the 130 million children not in school are girls.

Still too often, we fail to see the connection between women's rights and human rights. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press, the rights to petition the government and to assemble -- all these are essential. But think how much weaker these rights are in a nation where the majority of young women are illiterate. Rights on paper that can't be realized in practice are not really rights at all.

The full protection of the rights of women is the unfinished business of this turbulent century.

The beliefs inscribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were not invented 50 years ago. They are not the work of a single woman or culture or country. Some of humanity's bravest lessons emerge only after its deepest tragedies. This Declaration took shape in a world ravaged by the horrors of militarism and fascism -- in the wake of the most violent revelation of the depths to which human beings can dehumanize one another. But these rights have been with us since civilization's first light.

It is time for the global community to embrace human rights and especially women's rights once and for all. Now, while we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, we must rededicate ourselves to completing the work that farsighted men and women started 50 years ago. We owe it to every woman who is not living in freedom and security. Women's rights, after all, are human rights, and human rights are women's rights.

COPYRIGHT 1987 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

December 9, 1997

DRAFT

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

COLUMN FOR NOVEMBER 20, 1997

There is no greater tragedy for any family than when parents are unable or unwilling to care for their children. And there is no greater challenge for society than to decide what to do with children in these circumstances.

Today, nearly half a million children are in foster care, separated from their parents because of abuse or neglect. For most of these children, foster care is a temporary safe haven until they can return home. But for others, it's a bleak waiting game that can go on for years. Shuffled from family to family, they have little hope of being reunited with their birth parents or finding permanent placement with adoptive parents who will care for them and love them.

While there is no quick fix for the foster care crisis, and no fool-proof formula for deciding every foster care case, our nation took a giant step this week in improving the prospects for children in need of permanent homes. At a ceremony in the Rose Garden, the President signed legislation that, for the first time, will put the interest of children first when it comes to adoption and foster care. [NOTE: needs more emotion here, something personal would help.]

This new law gives states greater flexibility in assessing when and whether parents are able to meet their responsibilities to their children. States will no longer be required to reunify families who have come apart due to “aggravated circumstances”, like torture, abandonment or sexual abuse. At the same time, the law will redouble efforts to keep families together by helping families overcome problems that can lead to family instability.

The new law will give states financial incentives to increase the number of adoptions by assuring prospective adoptive parents that children with special needs will retain their health care coverage. It also will require states to come to quicker resolution about permanent plans for foster children. And the new law will provide funding for the education and training of judges who must decide the fate of children in the foster care system.

This legislation surely will ease the pain and confusion that so often marks foster care cases. For too long, in courtrooms across America, children have been caught in a legal tug of war in which their own rights must compete with the noble, but sometimes unrealistic, ideal of family reunification.

I remember once representing a foster family in Arkansas that wanted to adopt a four-year old boy who had been in their care for three years. The boy had been abandoned by a mother who suffered from psychological problems and he showed all the symptoms of severe mistreatment; he had gained little weight, was unresponsive and shied away from human contact.

But in his foster family he began to thrive. Still, when his foster parents tried to adopt him, the state adoption agency refused. Instead, state officials began to consider returning him to his birth mother, who had filed suit to get him back.

It seemed clear that keeping the little boy with his foster parents was in his best interest. What was not clear was whether his health and safety was the priority that counted most in a court of law.

Thankfully, the judge allowed the foster parents to adopt the boy, giving him the opportunity that all children need and deserve: to grow up in a safe, loving, and stable family.

Not all of us are parents, but all of us have been children. We all know the importance of having a caring permanent family - either because we have been fortunate enough to have had the experience or because we are painfully aware of what we have missed.

I know that laws are not the answer to all of our nation's problems. A loving home and responsible parents are not things that can be legislated. But laws can help protect our most vulnerable children and smooth their paths to stable homes with mothers and fathers who want to take them in.

That's what this new law does. And what better gift can we give this Thanksgiving week than the hope for tens of thousands of children in foster care that they, too, may soon know the joy of spending the holiday season with a family that cares for them and loves them.

TALKING IT OVER
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two years ago, during a visit with Bill to Northern Ireland, I shared a pot of tea with Joyce McCartan. A Belfast mother who had lost her youngest son and more than a dozen relatives to sectarian fighting, Joyce was determined to bring Protestant and Catholic women together to work for peace and a better future for their children. At the end of our visit, Joyce gave me the teapot we used because I was impressed by how it had kept our tea so warm.

Not long after we met, Joyce passed away. Last week, I took that teapot, which I use every day in the private kitchen at the White House, back to Northern Ireland when I delivered the inaugural Joyce McCartan Memorial Lecture at the University of Ulster. I took it with me to remind the women of Northern Ireland that the issues all women discuss over a pot of tea and the issues that matter most to families -- how we care for and protect our children -- are the issues that unite us all. Joyce liked to call herself "a family feminist" because strengthening families was at the root of her efforts.

I have been privileged to travel widely on behalf of our nation. In these travels, I have had the opportunity to meet many of the world's leaders. Yet it's often in small groups -- sitting around a kitchen table, sipping tea with women like Joyce, sharing concerns and talking about our families -- that I've learned the most valuable lessons. And one of those lessons is that an extraordinary power is unleashed when ordinary women reach out to their neighbors and find common ground -- when they begin working together to lift up themselves, their families and their communities.

In Northern Ireland, countless women like Joyce McCartan have endured the loss of loved ones to the Troubles -- and then moved on, refusing to give in to bitterness or dwell in the past. Joyce started the Women's Information Drop-In Center, a safe place where women of all backgrounds and beliefs could come together. Other community organizations, like the National Women's Council of Ireland, are working toward the same end.

These straightforward efforts to share grief across sectarian lines have blossomed into dynamic alliances to end poverty and violence. When the women of Northern Ireland have come together, they have spoken out and demanded political action -- to advance not the interests of individual groups

but the issues that affect all the people of Northern Ireland: health care, education, job training and peace. These women recognize that while the violence that plagues Northern Ireland has ancient roots, it is fueled, in large measure, by a lack of economic and educational opportunity.

On this visit, I saw how peace can and must be Northern Ireland's destiny. I had the chance to see many of the same women I met two years ago. Though they may attend different churches on Sunday, they all say the same silent prayer for a child to return home safely from school or for a husband to make it back safely from work. Though they belong to different religions, seven days a week, their families struggle with the same deep-rooted causes of violence -- poverty, limited education, unemployment. For the women I met with, love of family and hope for the future run deeper than calls to hatred.

I felt this same commitment when I met with a group of young people. We gathered in Belfast's beautiful new Waterfront Hall, a state-of-the-art cultural center that had been built by Protestants and Catholics alike. They had come together for a province-wide forum to discuss ways to empower young people. For them, widening the circle of economic and educational opportunity was the key to peace and stability. As one young woman said, her generation was determined that their children would not have to "grow up in an environment where you were afraid to walk on the wrong side of the street."

Joyce McCartan, I imagine, would feel warmly about those words. After all, it was courageous souls like her who showed the young people in the audience the way toward a better, more peaceful future. To be sure, no one should have any illusions about how hard the road to peace will be. But as I told people in Dublin, Belfast and London, my husband is committed to standing by those who take risks for peace. Joyce McCartan was a risk taker. So are the men and women gathered around the table at the peace talks today. I hope they are not only talking about serious political issues but also sharing quiet asides about their lives and relearning how much they have in common. And I hope they are doing so over a cup of tea.

COPYRIGHT 1997 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

November 4, 1997