

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Sheila Jackson Lee in Houston, Texas

January 11, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, let me say I am delighted to be here and delighted to see such a large crowd. I keep reading in the Washington press that I am a lame duck, whatever that is. But I think what it means is that someday you show up, and no one else does. [Laughter] So it's delightful to see you here.

Let me say, I am also profoundly grateful to Jenard and Gail for opening their magnificent home to us tonight. And I did try to come once before and was unable to do so. So, Gail, I'm glad your mother came twice. Thank you, Ida. And I'm glad you hugged me and kissed me. I feel much better now. Thank you. [Laughter]

I want to thank Mayor Brown for being here. He has done a superb job for Houston. I'm very proud of Lee Brown. You know, he was our drug czar in the national administration before he got elected mayor. He proved that there was life after Washington. [Laughter] And I hope it's catching. [Laughter] I'm very proud of him.

I want to thank Lloyd and B.A. Bentsen for being here, and I don't want anybody to forget that this great economic recovery started on Lloyd Bentsen's watch and started before I ever took the oath of office, when Lloyd Bentsen announced we were going to cut the deficit by \$500 billion. The stock market boomed. Interest rates went down—[inaudible].

One of us needs to show respect for the other. You know, the other night they had this big dinner honoring Lloyd, and I called in, and I lathered all over him and said all these incredible things. And then I got off the phone and he said, "Now, who was that guy again?" [Laughter]

I want to thank my friend Billie Carr, who taught me a lot of what I know about politics. I love you and will always love you all my life. Thank you for being here. And thank you, Kathy, for singing. And I'd also—I've got something special I want to say about Sheila Jackson Lee, but I will introduce it by saying I'm glad Goldie Hawn came all the way from California to be with us tonight.

And here's what the relevance of this evening is to me. I was nominated for President, effectively, on June 2, 1992, because I won the California, Ohio, and New Jersey primaries and numerically had enough votes to win the nomination on the first ballot. Now, some of you may remember there was a guy from Texas named Perot who was also running, who was the rage of the moment. And the next day—this was supposed to be a happy night in my life, but that night on television and the next day, all the news stories were: Clinton wins the nomination, but he's dead meat; he can't be elected President; he's running third; everybody really wants to vote for Perot.

So it was not the happiest election evening headquarters we had in Los Angeles at the Biltmore Hotel, the old Biltmore downtown, and everybody I knew was around there feeling sorry for themselves. I thought it was pretty good. After all, I had gotten nominated, and I figured we had a few months to fix it. And Goldie Hawn and Chevy Chase showed up to tell me that they didn't think we were going to finish third. I have never forgotten it. I never will. I thank you for being here tonight. Thank you.

Now what's that got to do with Sheila Jackson Lee? A lot, because Sheila Jackson Lee also sticks. You know, I hate to tell you this. Sometimes we make jokes about you behind your back. [Laughter] Why? Because you have one pace—fast—and one pressure level—hard. [Laughter]

But let me tell you, this Representative from Congress—and I know a little something about the burdens that are imposed on Members of Congress, so let me say I'm delighted that Elwyn and Jason are here tonight. And I want to thank them for the contribution they have made to the welfare of the people of this congressional district and the people of this country, because it is very difficult to have a family and serve in Congress, much harder than most people know. It is very hard, and I thank you, sir. Thank you, Jason. Thank you.

But a lot of people think I came down here because they also went to Yale Law School. That had nothing to do with it. [Laughter] Your