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Virginia Beach Democratic Party Jefferson-Jackson Dinner

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Senator * or Department*: BAUCUS

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Virginia Beach Democratic Party

Jefferson Jackson Day Dinner

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Remarks by Senator Max Baucus
Virginia Beach Democratic Party
Jefferson Jackson Day Dinner
April 11, 1992

Thank you Congressman (Owen) Pickett. I am honored to be here with so many great Virginia Democrats tonight to begin the celebration of what I know will be a great year for the Democratic Party.

All of you probably know that Owen Pickett is one of the most respected members of Congress. He commands the respect of his colleagues because he gets things done. We are all looking forward to a great re-election victory for Owen in November.

I also want to recognize the new Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, Tom Moss. I understand that Speaker Moss is the first speaker from Tidewater in the history of Virginia. I know all you feel its been long over due.

And I am so pleased to see your outstanding Attorney General Mary Sue Terry here tonight. I hear Mary Sue might be getting ready to take charge of this great state.

Let me also recognize some of the other great Democratic leaders here this evening, Mayor Myra Obendorf, Delegate Glenn Crowshaw and Senator Clancey Holland, and Jeffrey Breit, your Virginia Beach Democratic Chairman.

I would be remiss if I didn’t say a few words about my colleague and your outstanding Senator, Chuck Robb. Chuck is one of the great leaders of the Democratic party. As most of you know, he has been entrusted this year to lead the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee to ensure that our party maintains control of the U.S. Senate. As you can imagine, this is a very tough job. I can tell you that Chuck has performed it magnificently. He has recruited the strongest group of Senate challengers and has already surpassed his fundraising goals. The Democratic Party and Virginia is lucky to have Chuck Robb in the United States Senate.

I am pleased to be able to spend a few minutes talking with you tonight about where we are today and where we are going as a political party and as a country. To me, this is a very exciting time.
All of us in this room tonight know about the incredible changes taking place in our country. The shape of American politics as we have known it in the last three decades is changing right before our eyes. The results of the recent Democratic and Republican Presidential primaries have sent a very clear message to all of us: the status quo is no longer acceptable:

A four hundred billion dollar budget deficit, a health care system that is broken, millions of Americans out of work, and a Government that can not seem to get its act together -- the American people are telling us loud and clear - Enough is Enough! Do Something! We want change, and we want it now.

Americans know that the Reagan and Bush Administrations have led this country down the wrong track. This year's primaries demonstrate that the American people are finally rejecting 12 years of Reagan-Bush economic policies. Policies that have created a callosal budget deficit and a crippled economy. Policies that have left millions of Americans out of work.

Americans are telling us that they can see what's been going on and that the jig is up. They know that in the 1980's, this country went on a spending binge. Only it wasn't tax and spend, it was charge and spend.

Government, business, individuals. None were immune from this siren call. We didn't invest, we spent. We didn't save, we spent.

The way the Reagan and Bush Administrations saw the economy, it was one big party of champagne and cake and dance 'till you drop. Now, the party's over, and a lot of people who never even got an invitation are out of luck and out of work.

And what we are left with is not simply a normal recession. It is the result of 12 years of mismanagement and mistakes. Mistakes that could have been avoided if there had simply been a disciplined long-range plan, and real leadership to follow it through.

When I read in the paper recently about Boris Yeltsin saying to angry Russians: "We lost time. If we had started [the] reforms two years ago, we would be living normally now," I think to myself, "Boris, at least you're one president who learned fast."

There's no question that the Russian Republic is in a lot worse shape. But we're also headed in the wrong direction.

The question now for all of us is this: Have we learned enough from the dissolute, aimless 80's to rebuild the economy into something sound and solid -- not just for today, but for tomorrow as well? Not just for ourselves, but for our children and their children, as well?
In the 1960’s we elected Presidents who believed in using the power of government - Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. America was much more wealthy, and optimistic then. In the 1970’s -the Post Viet Nam and Watergate era -- and in the 1980’s -- the big party - voters went the other way and elected Presidents who questioned the very essence of government. They believed the less government, the better. Ford, Carter, Reagan and now George Bush.

But now the American people are searching for something new. They do not want re-runs. We can’t turn back the clock to the 60’s, and, we certainly can’t continue on our present path.

We are at a very different place in American politics. One that provides great challenges and great opportunities for our party and more important, for all Americans.

Americans have now begun to realize that the future of our nation, compared with that of others, is less secure. They are wondering if we have the wherewithal to solve all of our problems. Have we learned enough from our failures so we can finally get on with the process of solving this country’s problems.

I think the Democratic Party has learned plenty: First and foremost, we’ve learned that we need to invest:

We’ve learned that we need to invest in an economy that creates well-paying, secure jobs. The type of jobs which will allow families to buy their own homes, save for the future and send their kids to college.

We’ve learned that we need to invest in a health care system that controls the soaring costs and provides quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

We’ve learned that we need to invest in our public schools and give them the resources and support to educate our kids so they can compete in the global economy.

We’ve learned that we need to start investing in our people once again through job training and family leave policies.

We’ve learned that we must make a serious investment in our infrastructure - our roads, bridges and transit systems.

But we’ve also learned that we can’t just lob money, and hope it hits where it can do some good. That’s already been tried and it hasn’t worked. The result?

For more than a decade, the federal deficit’s been grazing like Babe the Blue Ox. And now, unless we consume less and invest more in strategies to makes us stronger, that ox is going to eat us alive. So its time we start making focused choices and investments.
Investment. Saving. Building. Discipline. And people. Those things are real. They’re essential virtues that must be the bedrock of our long-term economic strategies.

But there’s something else of even more importance that we have learned - we’ve learned that we need to elect a President who has the vision and leadership and the determination to get this country back on the right track.

I am supporting Governor Bill Clinton and believe he will be that President.

Bill Clinton offers the American people the vision and determination to get this country moving again. He will lead a government that provides opportunity for all but also inspires responsibility throughout our society.

Bill Clinton believes in a government that will invest in its people through education, training, early childhood intervention and national service.

Bill Clinton has a record of experience and accomplishment as the senior Governor of this nation. He has a plan to get America back to work again and help the forgotten middle-class.

And unlike George Bush, Bill Clinton will be a pro-choice President. He’ll be one President who won’t let the Pat Robertson crowd dictate our family values.

Bill Clinton can bring all Americans together again by forging racial unity.

The Democratic Party has always been the party with the big umbrella -- the party that has responded to the needs of the people and accepted the great majority of them into its ranks. Our ability to build coalitions has been the source of our greatest strength. Bill Clinton can forge a new Democratic coalition - a coalition of change.

The votes that have been cast for all the Democratic candidates this year demonstrate very clearly that our party is the party of change.

Votes for Jerry Brown express that so many are fed up with the power of special interests. They want their government to address the real issues that affect their lives.

Votes for Paul Tsongas prove that both Democrats and Republicans want a President who will take control of the economy. A President who will work with businesses not against them, to re-tool our manufacturing base and improve our ability to compete in the new global economy.

Bill Clinton knows all this, and he understands what it takes to bring all of these people into the new Democratic coalition. A coalition that will enable us to take back the White House next November, and move our country forward again.
And my friends, we won’t have to worry about our nominee fighting back. This guy is tough. He has been tested under the most trying of circumstances and has proven his strength and determination as a national candidate. Bill Clinton can withstand the heat and can lead our party to victory in November.

And now, it is time for all of us as Democrats to unite behind him and begin our real campaign: the campaign to defeat George Bush.

And we can defeat George Bush this November. The President’s once astronomical approval ratings have plummeted to 39%. Poll after poll shows that Americans believe we are on the wrong track. Consumer confidence in the economy recently hit a fifty year low. Americans are well aware that something is wrong. And they want change.

If people begin to see Democrats addressing what they in their hearts know to be the countries fundamental problems, it will not only help restore their confidence in the economy, it will renew their faith in the Democratic party.

I am confident that we can win back the faith of the American people and take back the White House. I’d like to offer you one final thought.

A while back, the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., wrote a small book called The Disuniting of America. It’s about the centrifugal tendencies in our society, the things pulling us away from one another.

We’re all conscious of them, from the larger cultural and ethnic divisions, to something as basic as 100 cable channels on our television sets.

A lot of authors in the last few years have said pretty much the same thing. They say we’ve lost our center, and wonder how we get it back. They also ask, "Why do Americans hate politics?"

I don’t think Americans have ever loved politics. But they do like to hear straight talk about where we are and where we must go, so they can make a choice.

I think restoring the sense of clarity of purpose -- even over our differences -- is a unifying force. It gives people confidence that they aren’t being jerked around.

This year, Democrats have to say what they think, and deliver. We have a solid message to deliver and the leadership to follow it through. It’s not partisan to disagree, as long as you’ve got a legitimate case to make. And we certainly do.

I think the country is ready for this kind of Democratic leadership. It’s up to us, now, to be ready for them.

Thank you all. And on to victory in November.