

THE CHANGING ELECTORATE
Remarks by Al From, DLC Founder & CEO
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As we conclude this day, first of all I want to thank all of you for participating. I think we've had a great day. And I hope you'll agree with me that our hosts from Indiana -- starting with Evan Bayh and Governor O'Bannon and Lieutenant Governor Kernan and Mayor Peterson and all the members of the legislature that have been here -- have just been terrific. Isn't Indianapolis a great city? While I'll probably do more of this tomorrow, I also want to thank the members of DLC and the PPI staff who have worked so hard to put this together. Thanks also to the members of Senator Bayh's staff, who have had an extra burden with this being their home state. I just think all of our staffs have done a terrific job and I want to thank them.

Tomorrow, among other things we're going to have a lot of our rising stars from the cities come. Right now I'd like to recognize my friend Martin O'Malley, the mayor of Baltimore who just joined us. You know, Baltimore has hosted the last two national conversations and we want to keep this competition strong.

Here's what I want to do. I want to go through some data and talk about a big issue facing the Democratic Party: how we close the culture gap. I hope a lot of you've seen our BLUEPRINT magazine. I hope you'll read it. There is a lot of good information, good ideas in that BLUEPRINT. The key to what I call breaking the tie in American politics is closing the culture gap, and I'm going to make three points today. First, I'm going to talk about the new electorate and the new political context in which we are now operating. Second, I'm going to talk about what I think we learned from the 2000 election that's very important as we look ahead. And, third, I want to talk about the New Democrat formula for closing the culture gap and breaking the tie in American politics.

The first point. The parties in America are at political parity. Let's look at this right now. If you look at what happened last year, we had essentially a tie in the presidential election; a tie in the electoral vote; a tie in the Senate -- it was 50-50; close to a tie in the House. The vote, as I'll show you in a minute, was even in the House -- the national vote. And among state legislative houses, we are basically at parity. So all over the country by every measure the two parties are almost equally divided.

If you look historically at the presidential vote, what you'll see is that during the New Deal Era from 1932 to 1964, Democrats had a comfortable margin. During what I call the Republican Era -- the pre-New Democrat Era -- the Republicans had a very comfortable margin. But then, look what's happened since '92. My friend Michael Barone calls this the 49-percent nation. And this is the first time since the 1880's that we have gone for three straight presidential elections without either party reaching a majority. And as Barone says, what we in the New Democrat movement have done is to take the Democratic Party from the 43-percent party it had been to a 49-percent party. Unfortunately the Republicans are up there, too.

And just so you don't think it's a phenomenon in presidential races, consider the House. Looking at overall national vote for the House between '92 and '94 -- up until '92, we always had a reasonable majority. Starting in '94, Republicans had a two-point margin. But look at what's happened in the last three congressional elections. Essentially we've had a tie. Again, it's a 49-percent party.

Why is this? One, we have a New Economy which we've talked about before that's driving a new electorate. Two, I believe the political arrangements that shaped the politics in the Industrial Age are collapsing. Those arrangements are based on economic class, and we'll see some of the demographics in a minute that show how they're collapsing. And three, in my view, the new political order that's going to define politics in the Information Age just hasn't taken place.

In the Industrial Era, the dominant voters were working class voters. A lot of our political rhetoric is still aimed at industrial era politics. In the Information Age, the dominant voters are what we call a rising learning class. They tend to be more educated, more affluent. Some would call them middle to upper-middle class voters.

Let's just take a look very quickly at exit poll numbers on family income. We've adjusted the dollars, and if you look in 1980 when Ronald Reagan was elected president, we had about six times as many low-income voters -- if they're defined as voters under \$30,000 family income -- as upper-middle-class voters over \$75,000. Look at 2000. We have more upper-middle-class voters than low-income voters. That's a sea change in politics.

Now, how do people think about their situation? In the exit polls they ask voters "how would you define your class status?" And here's the fascinating thing. A few people will say upper class, a few people will say lower class. Most will say middle class. But 27 percent said upper class. Only 18 percent said working class. So 50 percent more voters perceive themselves as upper-middle class than working class. Now when they go to the polls that's how they're thinking. They're thinking of themselves not as working class but as upper-middle-class voters, and the other really startling statistic I thought was 70 percent of the voters in last year's presidential election owned stock.

Last night Joe Lieberman and I were kidding about traveling together in the campaign, but one of the places we went to -- I think it was somewhere in Florida, in Tampa, I believe, and we went and visited a firehouse. And you heard Harold Schaitberger of the firefighters last night talk about how the firemen really have New Democrat attitudes. Well, Joe asked them, "If I weren't here, what would you be talking about?" And their answer was "the stock market", and Harold told me when we first started talking after this last election it used to be when you went into a fire station you'd see ESPN on and people talking about the ball scores. And now you see CNBC and people looking at the stock ticker.

Now the same kind of changes have taken place in education. You've gone to a point where in this last election we had 42 percent of the voters who either had a college or a post-graduate degree. And three quarters of the voters had more than just a high school education.

We've heard about diversity. This is a trend that cuts for us very much. But if you look again in 1980, we had a black-white nation -- basically about 90 percent white and 10 percent black. By 2000 we're down to 81 percent white; blacks are about the same; but Hispanics -- Latinos are starting to move up to 7 or 8 percent, I believe that is. But the projection is that in fifty years we'll have a nation that's about half white, 25 percent Latino, 13-14 percent African American, 8 percent Asian. It will be a very different country. It will change our politics dramatically, give us opportunities -- as we've now had in states like California -- to come back as long as we stay in the political center. Because as Louis Caldera will tell you, we came back in California, one, because of the demographic change, but also because Gray Davis ran for governor as a New Democrat with a centrist message.

Now, one of the big changes in politics, as well, is the suburbanization of politics. In this last election about 46 percent of the voters were in the 'burbs, 29 percent in major cities, 27 or 28

percent were in rural areas. But that is a little deceptive because only 9 percent of the voters lived in large cities. And I'll give you a sense of how this works in Congress. After the 1970 Census, we had about the same number of urban, rural, and suburban districts, and after the 1990 Census we had twice as many suburban districts -- these are super-suburban districts, districts with at least 60 percent of the voters living in the suburbs -- as, well, we had more than rural and urban. There are 212 district after the '90 Census that had 50 percent or more suburbanites. That number and this number, 160, will be way up after this new census, after this new redistricting, and you're all going through a lot of that in your states. And I hate to do this to my friend, Martin O'Malley, but just to give you a sense of what the change is, I picked Baltimore mainly because I know about Maryland -- because I live there.

In 1952, long before O'Malley was even on the scene, about 40 percent of the vote in Maryland came from Baltimore City, another 14 ½ percent from Baltimore County. But look at where it is now. In Baltimore City now -- in 2000 it was 9.2 percent of the vote in Maryland; Baltimore County about the same. The growth was in the Washington suburbs. And that is a pattern that is repeated in every big city in the country.

Now, one of the things that has happened in the 1990s is the union vote has actually increased a little bit. John Sweeney's efforts have been very helpful in really maximizing what is a declining part of the American electorate. And it's important to understand that. But even so, with the great efforts of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney and Steve Rosenthal, to get out the vote, the union households as percentage of the electorate were less than they were in either '84 or '80. But this is a remarkable achievement to get it back up to 26 percent because in 1980 about 20 percent of the workforce was unionized and it is down to under 15 percent today. So the union organizing is getting the vote out. The problem is there aren't enough union voters. And one of the reasons is that the economy is changing.

I found this a really fascinating statistic. In 1992 when we first ran and when a lot of you first met Bill Clinton and me running around the country, there was no Internet. In 1996 about a quarter of the people regularly used the Internet, and in this election about 65 percent, which means of course that if we go into 2004, you're going to be in the 80 and 90 percent range.

The other big change that I think is important to understand is that even as our country ages it goes through generational change. The New Deal Era voters are dying off. Less than 10 percent of

the voters in 2000 were New Deal voters. In other words, they voted first for Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman for president. And the dominant generations were the skeptical generations, baby boomers, GenX, and GenY.

Well you say, why does this matter? What difference does it make? Well, the reason is that the New Deal was really an anomaly in American history. It's the only era in our history where Americans have looked directly to the federal government to solve their problems because we had pretty big problems. We had a great depression. We had a world war and at the end of it we had the civil rights movement. All needed national solutions.

But think about the defining political experience that started for the generations that came of age in the late '60s or later. Vietnam. Watergate. The most serious economic trauma was double-digit inflation and not depression or recession. All of which made them more skeptical about government.

Now how does that affect the way people think about politics? As you can see here, when Reagan was elected 40 percent of the voters identified as conservative, 24 percent liberal, 36 percent moderate, but look what's happened now. Now fully half of the electorate identifies as moderate, liberals are about 20 percent, conservatives about 30 percent. More on that in a minute.

The other thing that has changed is if you go back over twenty years and if we went back further -- I just don't have the data easily at hand going back further -- what you'd find is the Democratic Party has stayed right around 40 percent. Independents have stayed a little more than a quarter and this is party ID of people who actually vote. The independent number probably among the electorate is higher. But what has happened is the Republicans have taken the people who didn't know. And so what we're close to now is political parity not entirely in party ID, but given the long historical relationship particularly in the South with the Democratic Party of people who still identify as Democrat. but tend to vote Republican. I'd say that our party identification is just about even.

Now, what do we learn from the 2000 electorate? I said at the beginning that our class divisions in politics are starting to collapse. If you look in 1980, 1984 and even '88, Carter, Mondale, Dukakis only won voters with the lowest incomes.

But look at Clinton. He won voters from every income category except the very highest. Gore about split it down the middle. But the important thing is we didn't win low income voters by as much as we would have 25 years ago and they -- even the voters they won in the upper-middle class, higher-income voters -- their margins were a lot closer. So both parties now are competitive for voters pretty much up and down the income scale. Class divisions don't automatically tell you how you're going to vote.

But here's a trend that I found a little bit disturbing because we reverted in 2000 to a trend that we had broken in the Clinton elections but went back to 1988. This chart may be a little bit hard to read but basically what this shows is that we always -- Democrats in every election since 1980 - have won high-school dropouts. In '80 and '84 we lost every other education category. In '88 we won high-school dropouts and people with post-graduate degrees, the undereducated and the overeducated. Now, this is no laughing matter because it is one measure of how you do in the middle class among the voters who decide elections, okay? Now, what you see is in the Clinton years we won high school graduates, people with some college, and both times we lost college graduates by two points. So we really won the combination of college graduates and post-graduate degrees.

But look at the Gore pattern. We won high-school dropouts. We won post-graduate degrees. We lost high school graduates, some college and college degrees. I'm not particularly happy about that.

Now, there was a lot of talk about the populist message. And if its target was to win white voters, it didn't work very well because we won white voters with incomes under \$15,000 a year, lost every other category of white voters. And if its real target was to win working-class, down-scale, white men, we'd have been on this side of the chart. But unfortunately we lost in this election every income category and every education category among white men.

Now, we'll give you a little explanation of why. All those numbers so far have been from the exit polls. These numbers are from Mark Penn's polling. Mark will be with us tomorrow. He may talk a little more about this. We did some post-election polling to see what worked and what didn't work in the election.

We tested three messages. One, the Bush -- I want to change the tone in Washington; I'm a unifier, not a divider; bipartisan, and all the nonsense that he hasn't followed. [Laughter.] Secondly,

we tested opportunity, responsibility, community -- the New Democrat-Clinton message. And, third we tested the people versus the powerful. Now what you find is when you look at the whole electorate, all three messages are positive. The Bush and Clinton message a little better, but they're all positive.

But then, let's look at key voters. Among Gore voters -- the people who are going to vote Democratic anyway -- the people versus the powerful is the strongest message. But look among the Bush swing. We defined Bush swing voters as voters who were the last voters to decide to go to George Bush. In other words, they were open to Democrats for longer than any other Bush voters. In 1996 Clinton won just about 30 percent of them, and one of the reason was the message. The New Democrat message is much more resonant than the populist message with those particular voters. Gore won none of them. Clinton won about 30 percent. It was the difference between a 53-percent and a 48.5-percent election.

Now, I want to talk real briefly about the culture gap. You can see that if you look at these charts real quickly, the gender gap was enormous. We lost overall. We lost men by 10 points in 2000 and we won women by 11. But look among white men and white women. The gender gap among whites was not that we did so well among women as we did so poorly among men. We lost white women and we lost white men by 24 points. And if you look again at what happened by race, what you'll find is -- comparing '96 to 2000, Clinton ran -- I compare margins rather than raw numbers because Clinton was in a three-way race -- Clinton won, ran 9 points better than Gore among whites. He ran nine points worse among blacks.

But this is pretty alarming. He also ran 24 points better among Hispanic voters who are a growing part of the electorate. So we can't ignore our appeal to Hispanic voters. And this just is the way to graph it. What you'll see is the margin among black voters which is in red is greater. The lost margin among whites is also greater and the margin of victory among Hispanics was greater in '96. And this is just a chart that shows the gender gap.

But here's the interesting thing. Now I started in 1984, and as you can see there is only one time when we won either white men or white women. In '96 we won white women. We came very close to winning white men in '92, probably because Perot took so many of the white men out of the two-party vote and we tied white women. But every other time we've lost both white men and white women in presidential elections.

We've talked a lot about different ways to measure this cultural gap, and there is none to me that is more vivid than marriage -- married people with kids and married people generally. If you can see, if you're married you're more likely to vote Republican. Gore lost married people by nine points. He won non-married people by 19 points. The problem is 65 percent of the voters are married. And the other big category, I think, is married with kids. Gore lost them by 15 points. He won among people who didn't have kids by seven points and the same -- working women versus non-working women. These are just some of the areas where you really have big differences.

Now here is something that I find really fascinating. What we see is -- we all know that among gun owners who are 48 percent of the vote in 2000 -- we lost by 25 points. Among people who didn't have guns we won by 19 points. But if you compare that with 1996, what do you see? That Gore and Clinton ran about the same among people who have our point of view -- or the predominant Democratic point of view which would be the people that didn't own guns. Gore actually ran a couple of points better. But among the people who are probably the least likely to support gun control, who have the other point of view, Clinton ran 12 points better than Gore.

Now that pattern followed on abortion. And there are a couple of things to look at on abortion. These numbers which probably aren't particularly clear to you -- in the back anyway -- in parenthesis are the percentage of the electorate who had these positions in these various years. The interesting thing is the pro-choice position, even though it still is favored by 56 to 40 over the pro-life position, in the electorate as a whole has decreased in support. In 1992 it was 63-32 pro-choice. So in other words, the pro-choice position has weakened a little bit, but again, among pro-choice voters, Clinton and Gore ran almost the same. Among pro-life voters and particularly those who I would call soft pro-life voters -- they don't think abortion ought to be always illegal just mostly illegal -- Clinton ran 15 points ahead.

Now, Joe Lieberman talked about this again a little bit and I don't have comparative numbers on this but it's worth looking at -- we lost people who regularly go to church, go all the time, go weekly and we won people who don't go to church. The best comparison I have is to 1992, which is probably a combination of these first two categories, people who go at least weekly, and Clinton again ran about 8 or 10 points better than Gore. You've heard a lot of talk about Bush really emphasizing Catholic voters. Well, what he saw was that Gore won Catholic voters but only by 3 points and he

lost white Catholic voters. So Bush probably sees some opportunity, particularly in some of those heavily Catholic industrial states of getting ethnic white Catholics.

This is the last chart I have on sort of what I call the cultural ideology, differences in gaps. The focus here, just to show you, you know, Gore and Clinton ran almost the same, almost to the point, among liberals and among Democrats. Where did Clinton gain? He ran way ahead of Gore on moderates and conservatives, on Republicans and Independents. In other words, we maximized our vote to a degree on the left.

But if we want to win, we've got to cut our losses on the middle, and there's no surrogate for a lot of these cultural issues that's any better than the question that asked in every exit poll on the role of government. It always comes out somewhere, 5-4 or a little more, that people like less government. Now again, most Democrats like more government; most Republicans like less government. But among the people who want more government -- in other words, the position of most Democrats -- Gore and Clinton ran the same. Among the people that want less government, Clinton ran 16 points ahead.

Now how did these play out in the election? The blue states are the states that Clinton won twice and Gore won in 2000. The red states are the states the Republicans won all three times, and The green states are the states that were in play -- not very many liberal states in here. You can study that sometime later. But let me just tell you -- you don't want to read all that stuff, because it's too hard, but the bottom line is if Gore won the same states he won in 2000 in 2004 his electoral vote deficit wouldn't be four votes, it would be 18 because of where the growth is. The growth is in all states in these two categories Bush won except for California. The net gain is all in states Bush won.

Now, how do we deal with this? I think the New Democratic approach is the only way to do it. What is a New Democrat? For those of you new to the DLC, what New Democrats are are the modernizers of the Democratic Party. What we try to do is further our party's enduring values with new and innovative ideas.

And what are those values? Andrew Jackson's credo of opportunity for all, special privilege for none. We think the way to further that credo in the information age is to have policies that lead to a growing private economy. It is pursuing the traditional values that most Democrats and most

Americans believe in -- work, family, responsibility, freedom, faith, tolerance, inclusion. It is reconnecting our party with John Kennedy's ethic of civic responsibility, of mutual responsibility. The idea that we don't just ask of our country but we ask people to give something back to the commonwealth.

It is restoring the Democratic Party's traditional global outlook. I know that trade is one of those issues where there are still differences in our party. But the idea that the Democrats have this long protectionist tradition is just wrong. I always like to remind people that Smoot and Hawley were Republicans and Herbert Hoover signed the Smoot-Hawley tariff which plunged the world into even deeper depression.

Franklin Roosevelt rescued the free trade system because it was one of his ways to try to bring the country and the world out of depression. Every Democratic president since, including Clinton, has tried to initiate new rounds. And finally as New Democrats, we honor Franklin Roosevelt's true legacy, which is that of innovation. Roosevelt is the person who said, "New conditions impose new requirements on government and those who conduct government."

And what we're saying is that we believe in an activist government, but that a government for the Information Age has to be an empowering government, a government that -- in the words of Tom Daschle and Hillary Clinton and all the people who were talking this morning -- equips people with the tools to solve their own problems in their own communities.

We summarized it as the basic bargain: opportunity, responsibility, community. And how does that play on specific issues? It means that we stand for economic growth and opportunity, for fiscal responsibility, for work not welfare. I think one of the major achievements of the last eight years was passing the largest anti-poverty program ever -- a DLC idea -- the expanded earned-income tax credit, but then following that, having made work more valuable with welfare reform and replacing welfare with a work system, for strengthening families. Joe Lieberman talked, and Evan Bayh talked a little about that this morning. For preventing crime and punishing criminals. For non-bureaucratic empowering government and for fostering a new sense of community and an ethic of mutual responsibility that asks citizens to give something back to the country.

I believe that America is a New Democrat country and we have two trend questions that we've asked over the last four years and we'll ask again later this year to judge that. We ask people

what they think the proper role of government is. And about 15 or 20 percent always say, basically, to solve problems for people. Another 25 to 30 percent will say government is to stay out of everybody's way. That's the Republican point of view. But the majority every time is for the third way government -- a government that equips people with the tools to solve their own problems.

The same in terms of the government's role in the economy. What people want is not government to give people a bunch of social programs that are going to take care of their economic well-being because they know that won't happen. They don't want the government to ignore them. What they want is a government that creates conditions to spur economic growth.

Now, how do we summarize all this? What do we learn from the Clinton victories? I have six things that I think are really important as we talk about how we close the culture gap. First, you've got to promote growth and opportunity, not redistribution. If we aren't a party of growth and opportunity, we aren't going to be competitive in the middle class. And if you're not competitive in the middle class, nothing else matters. You can't win a national election.

Secondly, I think we've got to emphasize New Democrat positions on cultural issues that cut for us, like crime and welfare. These are progressive issues that also tell people we aren't just the same old Democrats they've voted against for 25 years leading up to 1992.

And there's another opportunity that George Bush has given us and that's on the environment. A lot of people look at the environment as a cultural issue. And George Bush is just on the wrong side of it. So talk about crime and welfare and the next generation of crime and welfare legislation. What Evan Bayh talked about on fatherhood is exactly the kind of thing we ought to talk about.

Next we have to stand for big ideas and not big government. Ideas like charter schools and community policing are big ideas. They change the whole way we approach big problems that dominated presidential elections for two decades, but they don't have to be viewed as big government. Our surveying indicated that the thing that hurt Al Gore more than anything else is that people perceived him as a big-government liberal. And the reason they did -- and I was on the plane with Lieberman and I saw this every day -- was we had a message every day that was a program that if you polled it individually, it would poll positively. In other words, if you asked people, "Would

you rather have our position on prescription drugs, or Medicare, or social security or patients bill of rights or the Republican position?" on every position individually they would side with us.

The problem is the cumulative impact of talking about that -- the program, program, program every day -- was to play into the bigger theme that Bush wanted to deliver. And in our post-election polling 41 percent of the people who voted for Bush said they did because they thought Gore was for too much government.

Fourth, I think we have to support family-friendly policies that help parents raise kids. In 1996, a lot of the elite media in the East anyway talked about all the small bore ideas that Bruce Reed and his colleagues in the White House came up with to run on, like the v-chip and school uniforms and curfews and all those things. Well, you know what those may be small bore ideas, but they connected with voters who needed and wanted help in raising their kids and wanted to know the government was on their side. And according to University of Michigan surveys, at least, Bill Clinton is the only Democrat since I've been looking at the data to have won married people with kids. So the ideas Joe Lieberman was talking about today -- the entertainment industry -- all help us deal with this culture gap.

Finally, I think you need to support a strong national defense. We just aren't going to do anything to cut our losses among white men if we are perceived as not ever supporting a national defense. And finally, on these divisive issues like abortion, and guns and gay rights, we need to continue to support the position we believe in. That's the important thing.

But we need to also avoid using polarizing language. You saw up on those charts that among people who agreed with the predominant Democratic position, Clinton and Gore ran about the same on all of these issues. Among people who oppose the Democrat position Clinton always ran about 12, 15 points better. Why was that? It was when Clinton talked about abortion, at least in 1992, he talked about them being legal, safe and rare. That got all the pro-choice vote, but it also mitigated his losses among pro-life voters.

For some of you who were in the breakouts on gun control, gun safety, John Cowen was talking about the initiatives that passed in Colorado and in Oregon last year where the message was, with rights come responsibilities, a message that, again, it's not going to take people who are avidly against gun control and bring them to our side, but people who are more reasonable, who will say,

you know, they say you have a right to own a gun -- they don't want to take your guns away, which was the charge. I know this because I was at labor rally after labor rally in the last month of the campaign with Joe Lieberman where we were dealing with was this problem every time. In both Colorado and Oregon we won gun safety initiatives on this message of with rights come responsibilities. So the way you talk about these issues without compromising your positions can make a big difference.

Now what is the New Democratic majority for the 21st Century? How do we become a majority party? Here's what we have to put together. We have to put together our Democratic base, but we've got to go beyond it. The Democratic base vote is very important. We can't win without it. But if we only have that, as you saw, both on party identification and on ideology, we can't win. It's got to include men and women. We've got to continue to try to press our advantage among women but we also have to cut our losses among men. We can't win if men continue to drop off Democratic support.

It's got to be multi-racial and multi-ethnic. You know, the Republicans believed they could win elections up until very recently by dividing the country racially and only winning white voters. We can't do that. I don't think there's been a Democratic presidential candidate who has won a majority of the white vote since Lyndon Johnson. But we need to do well enough among white voters and continue to press our advantage among minority voters so we can win a majority of the vote overall. Our coalition has to be a multi-racial and multi-ethnic coalition.

It's got to be urban and suburban. If Martin O'Malley wants to get support for initiatives for Baltimore City which are critical for the state in which I now live, he needs support from the suburbs. And we have advantages because the suburban areas are beginning to change, and we've got to make sure that we continue to grow in the suburbs. If we put together an urban-suburban coalition, we'll be in pretty good shape.

We've got to get moderates as well as liberals. I say this not as an ideological statement but as a matter of pure mathematics. If we have three conservatives for every two liberals and they win all the conservatives and we win all the liberals, if we don't get 60 percent of the moderates, we don't even tie. Okay? Now think about this. Al Gore won moderates by 8 points, Bill Clinton won them by 24, a big difference in the election. And finally, to go back to where I started on the

demographics, we've got to continue to get working class voters but we've got to do as well in the rising learning class.

So what's my bottom line? In a time of parity, message matters more. How we frame our message is going to have a big impact on whether we win elections. The next progressive majority I am convinced is going to be built around ideas and not just interest groups. How we frame that message is going to be critical to the difference between victory and defeat. What we're talking about, don't forget, is not changing 20 percent of the electorate but maybe five or ten. We're at 49 percent. If we were at 53 percent we would have had a landslide.

So we're not talking about big changes. And finally -- and I think this is, to me, the most important thing -- the best government in the end is always the best politics. And if we have the right ideas, good ideas -- Bill Clinton said this when he assumed the chairman of the DLC in 1990 -- he said, "If we have the right ideas that tend to the needs of ordinary people in their everyday lives, the politics and the candidates will take care of themselves." I guess he knew what candidate was going to take care of himself. But I think that's right. That is just critically important.

This movement, which has, I think, modernized progressive politics in the United States and increasingly around the world, is based on ideas, on values. That's why at this conference we focus on values and ideas, because after a long losing streak in presidential elections in 1989 and '90, we got together and said: if we don't do something about our party on fiscal discipline, crime, welfare and the role of government, people will never vote for us again for president. So we went out and we said we're going to do something about those things and we did -- and we won the presidency twice -- the first Democrat to win the presidency and win re-election in six decades.

Now we have to look at the market place again -- the electorate. And we need to deal with this culture gap, and I'm convinced, with innovative ideas that further the values we've always believed in, we can close that culture gap. And so maybe in another decade or even sooner we'll be able to come back and say the Democratic party is back to where it ought to be -- as the natural majority party in American politics.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]