

Hillary Clinton, National Building Museum, Washington, 7 giugno 2008

Well, this isn't exactly the party I'd planned, but I sure like the company.

And I want to start today by saying how grateful I am to all of you, to everyone who poured your hearts and your hopes into this campaign, who drove for miles and lined the streets waving homemade signs, who scrimped and saved to raise money, who knocked on doors and made calls, who talked, sometimes argued with your friends and neighbors, who emailed and contributed online, who invested so much in our common enterprise, to the moms and dads who came to our events, who lifted their little girls and little boys on their shoulders and whispered in their ears, "See, you can be anything you want to be."

To the young people, like 13-year-old Anne Riddell from Mayfield, Ohio, who had been saving for two years to go to Disney World and decided to use her savings instead to travel to Pennsylvania with her mom and volunteer there, as well.

To the veterans, to the childhood friends, to New Yorkers and Arkansans, who traveled across the country, telling anyone who would listen why you supported me. And to all of those women in their 80s and their 90s - born before women could vote - who cast their votes for our campaign. I've told you before about Florence Steen of South Dakota who was 88 years old and insisted that her daughter bring an absentee ballot to her hospice bedside. Her daughter and a friend put an American flag behind her bed and helped her fill out the ballot.

She passed away soon after and, under state law, her ballot didn't count, but her daughter later told a reporter: "My dad's an ornery, old cowboy, and he didn't like it when he heard mom's vote wouldn't be counted. I don't think he had voted in 20 years, but he voted in place of my mom."

So to all those who voted for me and to whom I pledged my utmost, my commitment to you and to the progress we seek is unyielding.

You have inspired and touched me with the stories of the joys and sorrows that make up the fabric of our lives. And you have humbled me with your commitment to our country.

Eighteen million of you, from all walks of life - women and men, young and old, Latino and Asian, African American and Caucasian - rich, poor, and middle-class, gay and straight, you have stood with me.

And I will continue to stand strong with you every time, every place, in every way that I can. The dreams we share are worth fighting for.

Remember, we fought for the single mom with the young daughter, juggling work and school, who told me, "I'm doing it all to better myself for her."

We fought for the woman who grabbed my hand and asked me, "What are you going to do to make sure I have health care?" and began to cry, because even though she works three jobs, she can't afford insurance.

We fought for the young man in the Marine Corps tshirt who waited months for medical care and said, "Take care of my buddies over there, and then will you please take care of me?"

We fought for all those who've lost jobs and health care, who can't afford gas or groceries or college, who have felt invisible to their president these last seven years.

I entered this race because I have an old-fashioned conviction that public service is about helping people solve their problems and live their dreams. I've had every opportunity and blessing in my own life, and I want the same for all Americans.

And until that day comes, you'll always find me on the front lines of democracy, fighting for the future.

The way to continue our fight now, to accomplish the goals for which we stand is to take our energy, our passion, our strength, and do all we can to help elect Barack Obama, the next president of the United States.

Today, as I suspend my campaign, I congratulate him on the victory he has won and the extraordinary race he has run. I endorse him and throw my full support behind him.

And I ask all of you to join me in working as hard for Barack Obama as you have for me.

I have served in the Senate with him for four years. I have been in this campaign with him for 16 months. I have stood on the stage and gone toe-to-toe with him in 22 debates. I've had a front-row seat to his candidacy, and I have seen his strength and determination, his grace and his grit.

In his own life, Barack Obama has lived the American dream, as a community organizer, in the state senate, as a United States senator. He has dedicated himself to ensuring the dream is realized. And in this campaign, he has inspired so many to become involved in the democratic process and invested in our common future.

Now, when I started this race, I intended to win back the White House and make sure we have a president who puts our country back on the path to peace, prosperity and progress. And that's exactly what we're going to do, by ensuring that Barack Obama walks through the doors of the Oval Office on January 20, 2009.

Now, I understand that we all know this has been a tough fight, but the Democratic party is a family. And now it's time to restore the ties that bind us together and to come together around the ideals we share, the values we cherish, and the country we love.

We may have started on separate journeys, but today our paths have merged. And we're all heading toward the same destination, united and more ready than ever to win in November and to turn our country around, because so much is at stake.

We all want an economy that sustains the American dream, the opportunity to work hard and have that work rewarded, to save for college, a home and retirement, to afford that gas and those groceries, and still have a little left over at the end of the month, an economy that lifts all of our people and ensures that our prosperity is broadly distributed and shared.

We all want a health care system that is universal, high-quality and affordable, so that parents don't have to choose between care for themselves or their children or be stuck in dead-end jobs simply to keep their insurance.

This isn't just an issue for me. It is a passion and a cause, and it is a fight I will continue until every single American is insured, no exceptions and no excuses.

We all want an America defined by deep and meaningful equality, from civil rights to labor rights, from women's rights to gay rights, from ending discrimination to promoting unionization, to providing help for the most important job there is: caring for our families.

And we all want to restore America's standing in the world, to end the war in Iraq, and once again lead by the power of our values, and to join with our allies to confront our shared challenges, from poverty and genocide to terrorism and global warming.

You know, I've been involved in politics and public life in one way or another for four decades. And during those 40 years, our country has voted 10 times for president. Democrats won only three of those times, and the man who won two of those elections is with us today.

We made tremendous progress during the 1990s under a Democratic president, with a flourishing economy and our leadership for peace and security respected around the world.

Just think how much more progress we could have made over the past 40 years if we'd had a Democratic president. Think about the lost opportunities of these past seven years on the environment and the economy, on health care and civil rights, on education, foreign policy and the Supreme Court.

Imagine how far we could have come, how much we could have achieved if we had just had a Democrat in the White House.

We cannot let this moment slip away. We have come too far and accomplished too much.

Now, the journey ahead will not be easy. Some will say we can't do it, that it's too hard, we're just not up to the task. But for as long as America has existed, it has been the American way to reject can't-do claims and to choose instead to stretch the boundaries of the possible through hard work, determination, and a pioneering spirit.

It is this belief, this optimism that Senator Obama and I share and that has inspired so many millions of our supporters to make their voices heard. So today I am standing with Senator Obama to say: Yes, we can!

And that together we will work — we'll have to work hard to achieve universal health care. But on the day we live in an America where no child, no man and no woman is without health insurance, we will live in a stronger America. That's why we need to help elect Barack Obama our president.

We'll have to work hard to get back to fiscal responsibility and a strong middle class. But on the day we live in an America whose middle class is thriving and growing again, where all Americans, no matter where they live or where their ancestors came from, can earn a decent living, we will live in a stronger America. And that is why we must help elect Barack Obama our president.

We'll have to work hard to foster the innovation that will make us energy independent and lift the threat of global warming from our children's future. But on the day we live in an America fueled by renewable energy, we will live in a stronger America. And that is why we have to help elect Barack Obama our president.

We'll have to work hard to bring our troops home from Iraq and get them the support they've earned by their service. But on the day we live in an America that's as loyal to our troops as they have been to us, we will live in a stronger America. And that is why we must help elect Barack Obama our president.

This election is a turning-point election. And it is critical that we all understand what our choice really is. Will we go forward together, or will we stall and slip backward?

Now, think how much progress we've already made. When we first started, people everywhere asked the same questions. Could a woman really serve as commander in chief? Well, I think we answered that one.

Could an African-American really be our president? And Senator Obama has answered that one.

Together, Senator Obama and I achieved milestones essential to our progress as a nation, part of our perpetual duty to form a more perfect union.

Now, on a personal note, when I was asked what it means to be a woman running for president, I always gave the same answer, that I was proud to be running as a woman, but I was running because I thought I'd be the best president.

But I am a woman and, like millions of women, I know there are still barriers and biases out there, often unconscious, and I want to build an America that respects and embraces the potential of every last one of us.

I ran as a daughter who benefited from opportunities my mother never dreamed of. I ran as a mother who worries about my daughter's future and a mother who wants to leave all children brighter tomorrows.

To build that future I see, we must make sure that women and men alike understand the struggles of their grandmothers and their mothers, and that women enjoy equal opportunities, equal pay, and equal respect.

Let us resolve and work toward achieving very simple propositions: There are no acceptable limits, and there are no acceptable prejudices in the 21st century in our country.

You can be so proud that, from now on, it will be unremarkable for a woman to win primary state victories - unremarkable to have a woman in a close race to be our nominee, unremarkable to think that a woman can be the president of the United States. And that is truly remarkable, my friends.

To those who are disappointed that we couldn't go all of the way, especially the young people who put so much into this campaign, it would break my heart if, in falling short of my goal, I in any way discouraged any of you from pursuing yours.

Always aim high, work hard and care deeply about what you believe in. And, when you stumble, keep faith. And, when you're knocked down, get right back up and never listen to anyone who says you can't or shouldn't go on.

As we gather here today in this historic, magnificent building, the 50th woman to leave this Earth is orbiting overhead. If we can blast 50 women into space, we will someday launch a woman into the White House.

Although we weren't able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it's got about 18 million cracks in it, and the light is shining through like never before, filling us all with the hope and the sure knowledge that the path will be a little easier next time.

That has always been the history of progress in America. Think of the suffragists who gathered at Seneca Falls in 1848 and those who kept fighting until women could cast their votes.

Think of the abolitionists who struggled and died to see the end of slavery. Think of the civil rights heroes and foot soldiers who marched, protested and risked their lives to bring about the end of segregation and Jim Crow.

Because of them, I grew up taking for granted that women could vote and, because of them, my daughter grew up taking for granted that children of all colors could go to school together.

Because of them, Barack Obama and I could wage a hard-fought campaign for the Democratic nomination. Because of them and because of you, children today will grow up taking for granted that an African American or a woman can, yes, become the president of the United States. And so, when that day arrives, and a woman takes the oath of office as our president, we will all stand taller, proud of the values of our nation, proud that every little girl can dream big and that her dreams can come true in America.

And all of you will know that, because of your passion and hard work, you helped pave the way for that day.

So I want to say to my supporters: When you hear people saying or think to yourself, If only, or, What if, I say, please, don't go there. Every moment wasted looking back keeps us from moving forward.

Life is too short, time is too precious, and the stakes are too high to dwell on what might have been. We have to work together for what still can be. And that is why I will work my heart out to make sure that Senator Obama is our next president.

And I hope and pray that all of you will join me in that effort.

To my supporters and colleagues in Congress, to the governors and mayors, elected officials who stood with me in good times and bad, thank you for your strength and leadership.

To my friends in our labor unions who stood strong every step of the way, I thank you and pledge my support to you.

To my friends from every stage of my life, your love and ongoing commitment sustained me every single day.

To my family, especially Bill and Chelsea and my mother, you mean the world to me, and I thank you for all you have done.

And to my extraordinary staff, volunteers and supporters - thank you for working those long, hard hours. Thank you for dropping everything, leaving work or school, traveling to places that you've never been, sometimes for months on end. And thanks to your families, as well, because your sacrifice was theirs, too. All of you were there for me every step of the way.

Now, being human, we are imperfect. That's why we need each other, to catch each other when we falter, to encourage each other when we lose heart. Some may lead, some may follow, but none of us can go it alone.

The changes we're working for are changes that we can only accomplish together. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are rights that belong to us as individuals. But our lives, our freedom, our happiness are best enjoyed, best protected, and best advanced when we do work together.

That is what we will do now, as we join forces with Senator Obama and his campaign. We will make history together, as we write the next chapter in America's story. We will stand united for the values we hold dear, for the vision of progress we share, and for the country we love.

There is nothing more American than that.

And looking out at you today, I have never felt so blessed. The challenges that I have faced in this campaign are nothing compared to those that millions of Americans face every day in their own lives.

So today I'm going to count my blessings and keep on going. I'm going to keep doing what I was doing long before the cameras ever showed up and what I'll be doing long after they're gone: working to give every American the same opportunities I had and working to ensure that every child has the chance to grow up and achieve his or her God-given potential.

I will do it with a heart filled with gratitude, with a deep and dividing love for our country, and with nothing but optimism and confidence for the days ahead.

This is now our time to do all that we can to make sure that, in this election, we add another Democratic president to that very small list of the last 40 years and that we take back our country and once again move with progress and commitment to the future.

Thank you all. And God bless you and God bless America.

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