

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
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001. paper	Interview of the First Lady by Elizabeth Drew; RE: private info [partial] (9 pages)	08/10/1994	P6/b(6)
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COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
First Lady's Press Office (Lissa Muscatine)
OA/Box Number: 20112

FOLDER TITLE:

FLOTUS Press Office Interview Transcripts Volume IV 06/07/94--10/13/94 [Binder] :
[08/10/94 Drew, Liz]

2011-0415-S

ms97

RESTRICTION CODES

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

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

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

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financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]

b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information
concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

08/10/94
DREW, LIZ

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

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August 10, 1994

INTERVIEW OF THE FIRST LADY
BY ELIZABETH DREW

Q Okay. Well, why don't you go on from the -- whatever you want, you know, on the situation now because I want to catch that too.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it's just that it's very difficult to move the process, you know, because I think it's a miracle we are at where we are right now, because everything about it militates against movement. So this latest has been just one in a long line of --

Q What do you mean, "the latest"? The CBO thing?

MRS. CLINTON: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Q I forget. Do you have one on the Mitchell bill?

MRS. CLINTON: When the CBO came (inaudible) the deficit, it came out -- when, yesterday -- on the Mitchell bill. But that took -- when did the Senate Finance Committee finish? Around the fourth of July, right? So it took a month to run those numbers. And the CBO hasn't even started on even the Ways and Means Committee, which is the basis of the Gephardt (inaudible).

Q A new form of torture. (Laughter.) You've seen the fuse.

MRS. CLINTON: I am actually becoming quite an observer of nearly every form (inaudible) possibly heard of.

Q They wanted you to have a total experience.

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah, that's true. They certainly are providing that.

Q While we're on it, let's just talk for a few minutes about this stage of the health care effort, the

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struggle. How do you see it now? Really, how you see it.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, how I really see it is that we've made extraordinary progress in getting to this point of having bills about to be debated on the floor of both Houses, although I am not fully sure how it is going to play out because, you know, the House had expected to be able to vote on the 19th. And if they don't get their CBO numbers -- maybe they can get them by the weekend. I mean, that's an aside.

But it's the kind of -- when we look back on everything that we've gone through to get to this point, it is a miracle that -- not only the larger, historical context of 60 years of efforts, none of which have ever resulted in a bill ever getting out of any committee, but then we've got what's happened in the last year and a half.

And it's been an incredible obstacle course that has been run to get us to where we are. And there are some, as you well know, who think we've moved too fast even though, I think, it's been a rather difficult process to get to this point.

Q Do you -- are you thinking of it as an obstacle course particularly erected for this issue, or are you just seeing how Congress works?

MRS. CLINTON: No, I think it's both. I think that -- I've had numbers of members of Congress who have said, "You know, we just don't move this quickly. There's no way that we can even address this." And, I mean, our whole idea was to get this done in the first term, but to push as hard as we could to get as much done as quickly as possible.

You know, and we've always set these time periods because if we hadn't we knew that they'd always be extended. If we hadn't set some kind of time period, we never would have gotten even what we wanted done within a three-month window.

So I think it has been remarkable, but, also, when you look back and you say to yourself, well, first you lose the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee amidst one of the most important legislative debates in our history, then the Senate majority leader announces he's not going to run again.

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I mean, you know, so it's not only the existing obstacles that occur any time Congress is asked to really put something on an expedited timetable. But it's these additional problems that have arisen which have certainly made it challenging.

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(Inaudible) tell me something like that. I will not reject hearing it (inaudible) interesting.

Well, were there other setbacks or other obstacles?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, let's start at the beginning. Let's start at the very beginning, you know. That way I'll probably, chronologically, be able to remember them.

If you go back and remember, the President initially wanted the bill drafted by May 1st. The reason for that was several members of Congress advised us strongly that our best strategy was to put health care into budget reconciliation, because then you only needed 51 votes in the Senate. Part of the reason we worked so --

Q I'm surprised (inaudible).

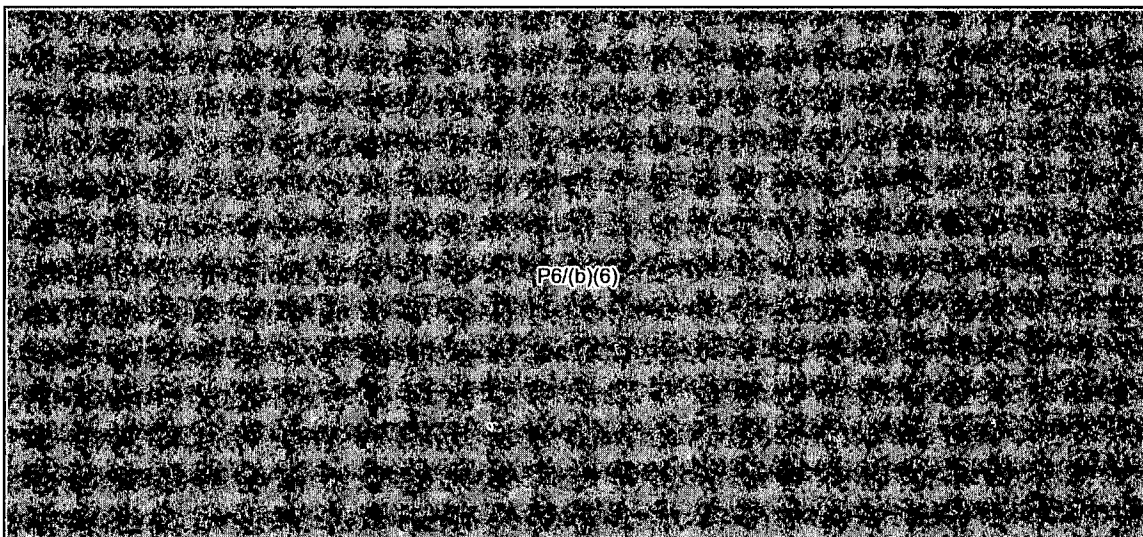
MRS. CLINTON: This was the strategy.

Q I would have thought that anyone who'd seen a reconciliation bill wouldn't have --

MRS. CLINTON: No, because, most of the time, people aren't going to read what's in a reconciliation bill.

Q Well, I mean, but no huge thing --

MRS. CLINTON: But that was the idea and it was on both the House and the Senate side.



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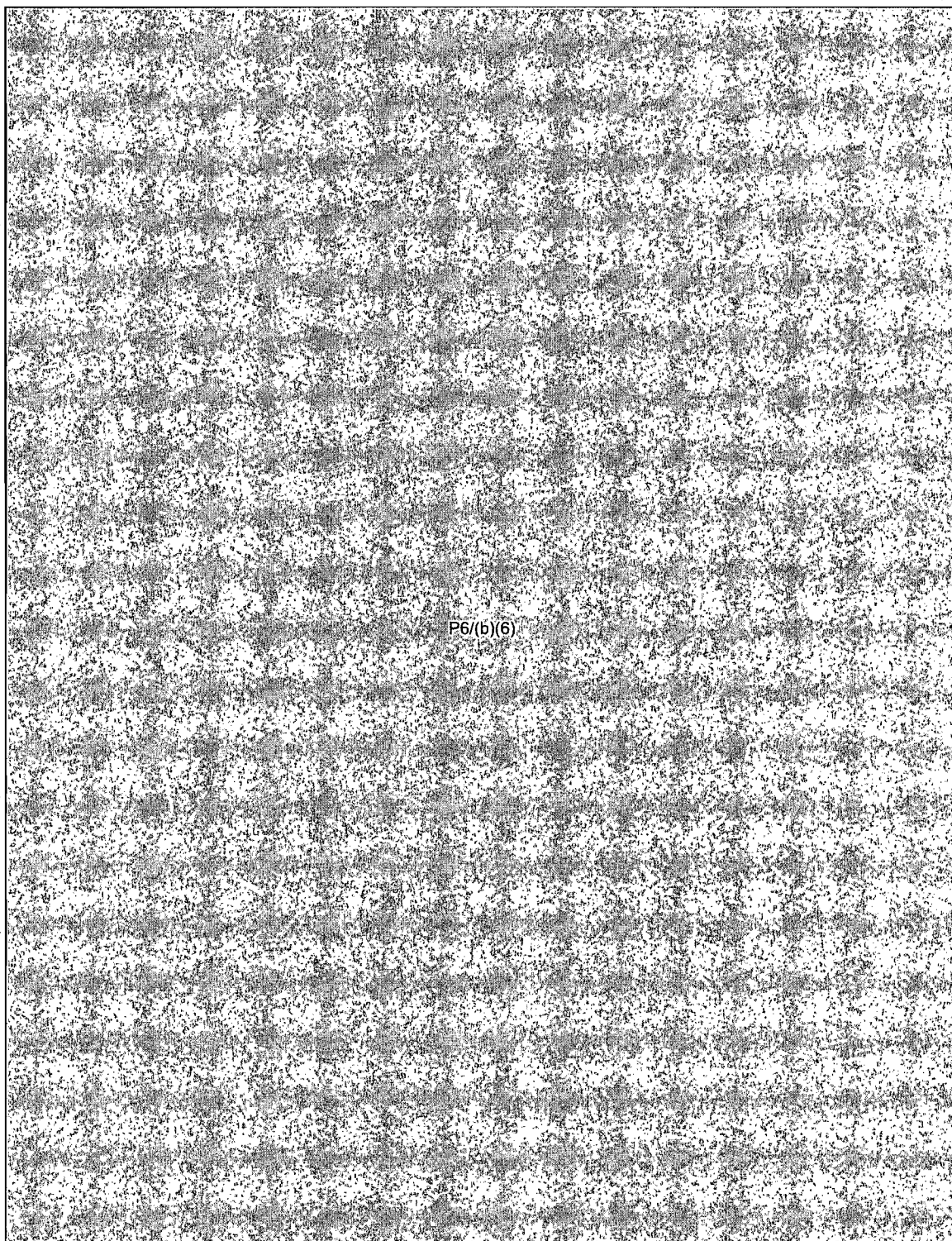
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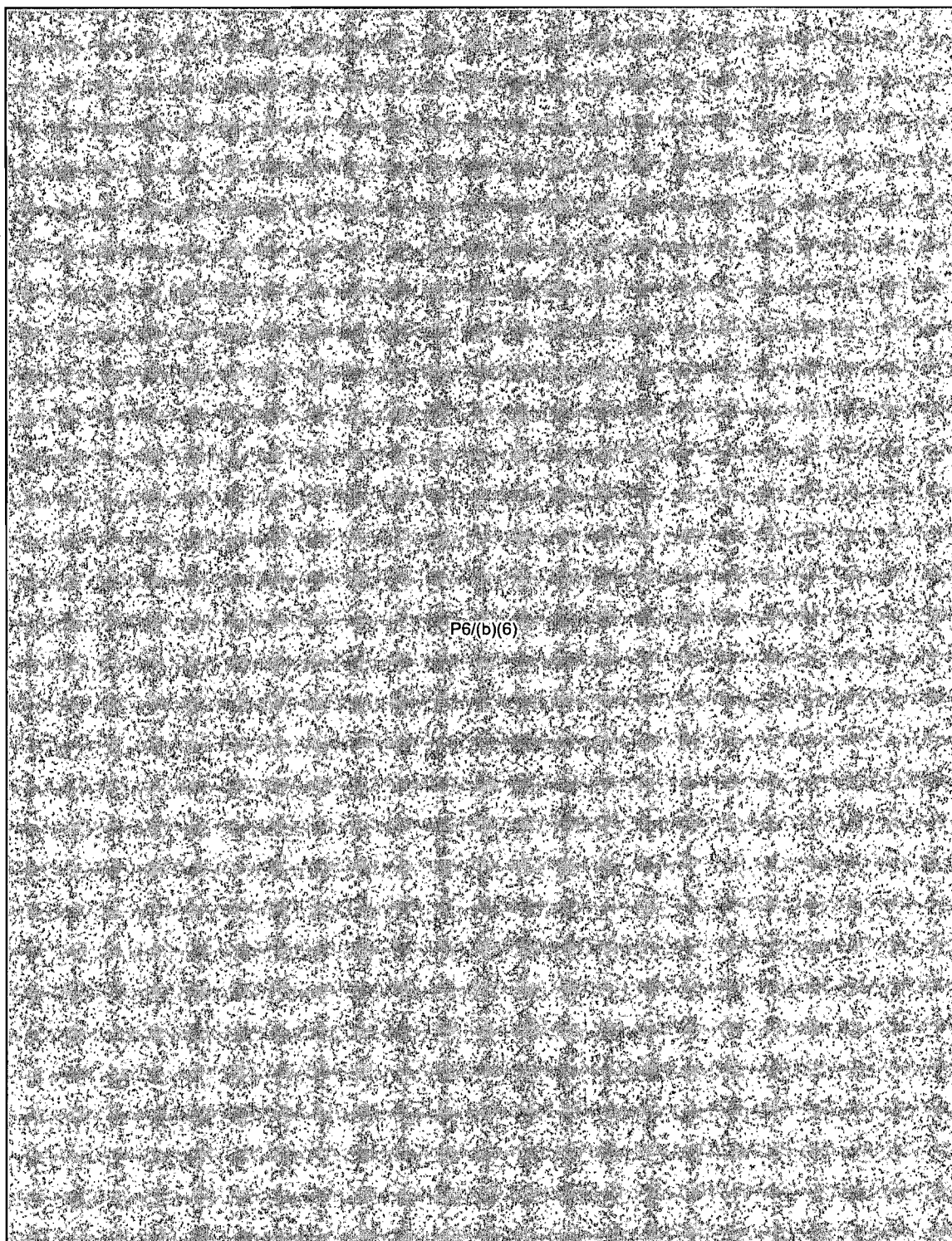
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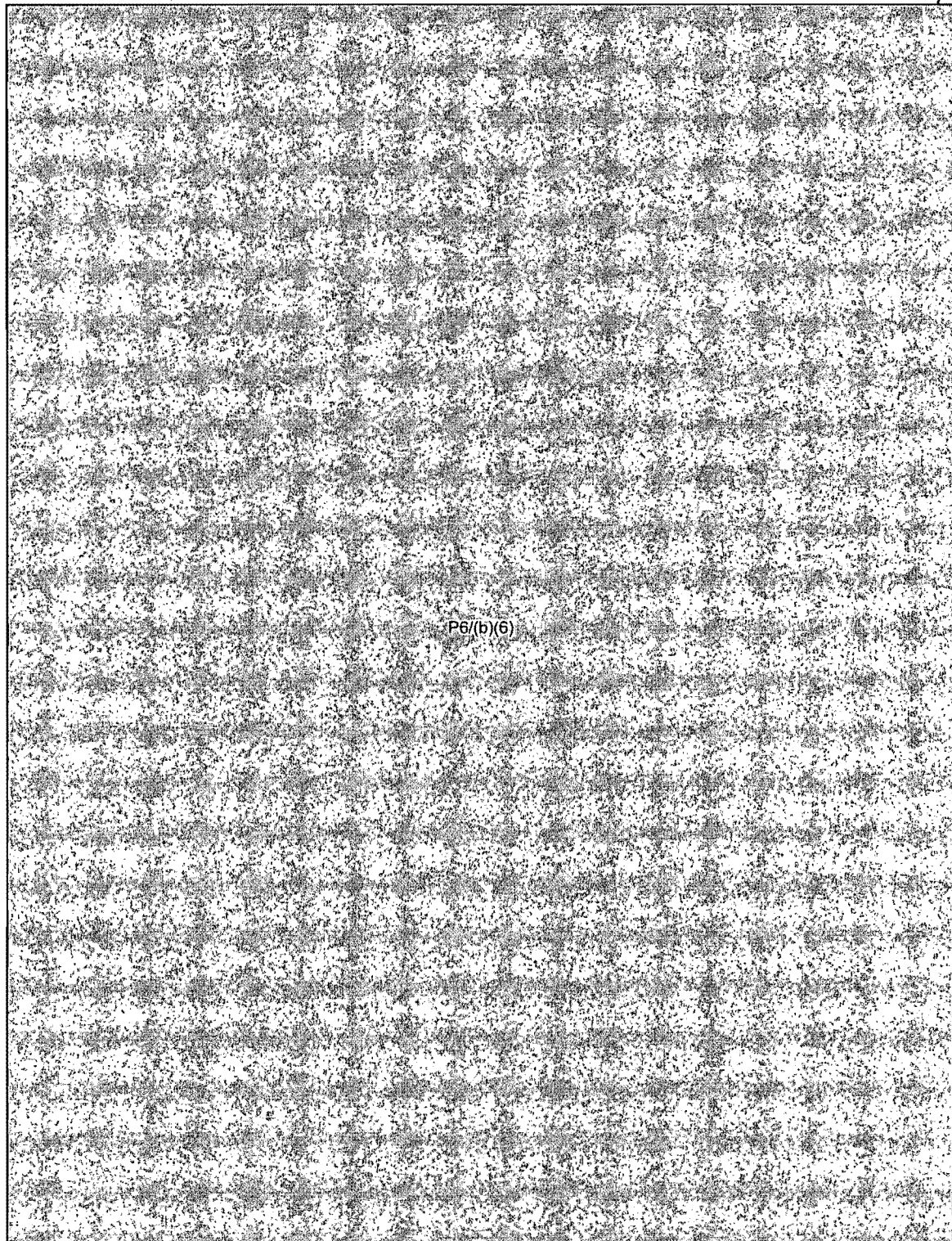
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Q (Inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: So I mean, it, you know -- there were just so many things that were important that people were trying to do. And so the President -- we had time on the President's calendar after reinventing government, health care window, then stop health care, do NAFTA, then pick up on health care again.

He goes out on health care and -- I'll never forget. He goes to California to do a huge event we had been planning. This was after he did the town meeting in Tampa, I think. This big event in Sacramento with thousands of older Americans and -- either it was Somalia or Bosnia, something happened. I'll have to go back and look at my calendar, you know. But it meant he had to come back, and he left Ira Magaziner out there.

Q That was Somalia. October 3rd was Somalia (inaudible). He came back -- he came back just a little early, but he did -- that's (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: That was Somalia. Yeah. And so, you know, even our plans of trying to build a nationwide, you know, real big, high-visibility Presidential kickoff, we ran into some obstacles. But we just kept plugging along, you know. We got the bills in. I did my testimony. We worked with the Congress staffers. We did lots of briefings for them, the CBO, et cetera.

Now, all during this time, the other thing that is happening is that every time we move towards the Republicans, they move away. This is not a new phenomenon. This has been going on all year.

You know, like late in the spring, I met with Senator Chafee, and I said, "Why don't we try to see if we can work out a bill together?" "No. No. You introduce your bill.

Then I'll introduce my bill. And then we'll sit down and talk." And so we would meet with Senators Danforth and Kassebaum, and we'd say, "We're putting the premium cap from your bill into our bill, the same language." "Oh," they

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said. Well, then within a couple of days, they'd move away from their old formulation.

So, I mean, we just kept reaching out and trying all the time. I'd go to the House where I met endlessly with the so-called moderates. And, you know, Marge Roukema would stand up and say, "Don't you dare tax benefits because, you know, my people in New Jersey have good benefits." Or Fred Grandy would take me aside and he'd say, "You know, I think, eventually, they ought to be able to go for employer mandate." Or Steve Gunderson -- you know, we have these people we are working.

So come the fall, and we're looking for sponsors for the Health Security Act, I called the -- I can't remember how many, but about 20 of the Republicans who are our targets to see if I could get one of them in the House. And they all said the same thing, which was, "I'm really with you. I'll be there at the end, but I can't publicly support the President's bill. I'll lose my -- fill in the blank -- my ranking position. I'll lose my opportunity to talk in the caucus. I'll lose my leverage with my colleagues."

And, you know, basically, Bob Michel had also announced his retirement. So in effect, he was no longer the Republican minority leader. Newt Gingrich was.

So the cooperation, I saw in the House prior to the Michel announcement slowly but surely evaporated. So that every one of those Republican House members, who had told me that they would be with me, all began to back off and to be, you know, very reticent even to be seen with me anymore or even to talk to me anymore.

And that was, you know, a big disappointment, especially because, you know, some of them had gone way out of their way to get involved in the drafting, to make suggestions, to tell us what they could accept and what they couldn't accept, to tell us how, if we introduced the bill with X, Y or Z in it, they would work in committees to get the changes.

And we would support their changes. And we said, you know, I mean, a lot of their changes we could live with. We'd be happy for them to take ownership to support the changes. All that was gone. So I think the Michel retirement was, you know -- I'm not sure to the same extent.

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But I think that had an adverse impact.

Then we're rolling along. We get NAFTA -- November or so, I guess (inaudible). The President is, you know, really doing well, taking off. And as I've always said with these people, whenever he goes up they, you know, come in and try to hit him with a two-by-four. So we had, you know, the resurgence of Whitewater and all of that stuff, and we had Rush Limbaugh, you know, proudly boasting that, you know, Whitewater is about health care.

Q Nightline.

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah.

Q Did he say that? Yes. That was the show from Iowa, the on (inaudible).

You've got that quote from (inaudible).

I have the Nightline transcript. Yes.

Great. Okay.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, and so -- and that just totally blows up, gets taken out of proportion to the nth degree, which it still is, but it interferes with, you know, the radar about how we can get the message about health care across. And, you know, for some period of time, you couldn't get any message across except that goofy stuff.

And, you know, I just don't think any White House has ever been hit with more effective political opposition as this one has. And I think the real story is that we kept going, and we kept accomplishing things, and we were not deterred, and we never gave in to the people who were trying to, basically, knock us off course. But having said that, it was also a problem because we kept having to deal with all this stuff.

Q Yeah.

MRS. CLINTON: So then, finally, the hearings begin, and, you know, we had tried to get the leadership to agree to, you know, a pretty expedited schedule, knowing that it would not likely be met, but, nevertheless, trying to get it laid out there.

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And some good things happened. Kennedy's process was a great process. You know, a lot of his Democrats were not health care enthusiasts. You know, Barbara Mikulski was very wary. Jeff Bingaman was negative. But the way he structured his process really moved people along. And Jeff Bingaman told me, after it was over, he said it was one of the most intellectually satisfying experiences that he'd ever had in the Senate.

Well, I wish that that process had been everybody's process. Instead we have, you know, just a very strange process in the Finance Committee. We had, you know, Rosty gone, Gibbons in, and everybody working hard with, you know, Pete Stark starting in a position that was very hard to move from. But, you know, Ways and Means came out with a product, and it's not a bad product. It's a pretty good product.

Ed and Labor, I think, struck the right deal, voting out both single-payer and the President's approach. And then Chairman Dingell, you know, ran up against the political ambitions of several of his members -- I guess is the best way to put it. And so, you know, he didn't get (inaudible) product.

But, you know, the bills that came out were all bills that were workable. But again, what you saw happening is every time anybody, whether it was Kennedy or Moynihan, particularly, or on the Ways and Means Committee, anytime anybody moved towards the Republicans, they moved away. Now, they would all vote for long-term care or coverage for women and children. Or, gosh, in Ways and Means the Republicans were, you know, proposing things like hearing aids for everybody.

But when it got to the big issues and the financing issues, they would all just take a walk. And what happened on the Finance Committee is that, I think, Chairman Moynihan thought that he would be able to put together a bipartisan bill because he took Chafee and Durenberger and Danforth and Packwood at their word. That they wanted to be cooperative, and they wanted to come out with something. And don't forget, they'd all signed on to a mandate.

I mean, you had the Chafee bill with individual mandate. And when I testified before the Finance Committee, Bob Packwood said, "Why are you calling your bill an employer -- why do people call it an employer mandate? It's not an

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employer mandate. It's an individual mandate. It's what I was for in 1972."

But every -- you know, and so Moynihan even suggested to Packwood, he said, all right, if you're not happy with the President's bill, let's reintroduce the Nixon bill that you proposed. (Inaudible.) So there was never any way to get them to stand still long enough ever to make a deal.

Q Well, I'll jump ahead to some because I'm afraid I'm not getting into some (inaudible) need to get to.

Well, I want to sort of get the sense of how you feel now. But if you -- we backed up a little bit -- when you realized Finance wasn't going to do it for you, and you had to -- you chose to, whatever -- with the Congressional leaders, say, "Okay, you guys, do a bill, and we won't call it the Clinton bill." Tell me about facing that one.

MRS. CLINTON: That was always what was going to happen. You know, we always knew that we were going to come out with different bills. That was always the plan. And it was always the plan that Mitchell and Gephardt would meld the bills.

Q Oh, I understand that.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, there was nothing new about that.

Q (Inaudible) the meeting that night, when they came. And it's kind of described as -- this is going too far -- it was kind of described not as starting over, but they would originate their own bills, and we will not call it the Clinton bill and (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah, but, you know, we had that on the drawing boards for months. I mean, we always talked about how, once we got through the committees -- we may not have talked about that with the Congressional leadership. But internally, we'd always talk about how once we got it through the committees, we would take what they had done and say they had modified it, we had listened to people, we had made some changes that we thought would improve it, and now we were moving forward.

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That was always the plan, and it was just something that took a long time to get to because it wasn't as orderly a process as we would have wanted it to be. But as I told an interviewer the other day, I mean, no piece of legislation a President sends to Congress ever comes out with his name on it. I mean, you know, that is just not going to happen.

Q But as I understand, there are -- I mean, there was some difficulty or that Mitchell had some difficulty as well (inaudible) having to back up to a bill of a certain level or kind in order to get it through the Senate. That he was distressed about that as well. And that that was -- you know, that was something that had to be accepted, but it wasn't fun.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't think -- you know, I don't think anybody is going to be satisfied completely with whatever we get. And I think that Senator Mitchell has put together what he believes is the very best product to get through the Senate. It's not what he would have introduced before this. Or, you know, I mean, he was very happy with our bill. I believe, you know, he thought it achieved the goals. But, you know, we always knew there would be changes. We just weren't sure what direction the changes would go and who would be the allies in order to move it forward.

But I think that -- I think he's done as good a job as he could. And, actually, I think it's a pretty smart position that he's taken. I don't know if it will ever get explained this way, but he, in effect, has taken the Republicans at their word.

You know, they've been saying they want voluntary market reforms, insurance changes, incentives to take care of the working poor. That's what he's given them but with a fallback in the event that that doesn't work. So it's, I think, an admirable melding of what the stated positions are.

But the problem is -- and, you know, and Senator Mitchell has said this -- every time any one of us moves, they move away. So here's Senator Mitchell, taking them at their word that they don't want mandates, giving them the front end of his bill to see whether or not it works, you know.

Q Excuse me. Wasn't this also necessary, though, just to get enough Democrats? I mean, you had a group in

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there -- you know, he had to get something he could get passed.

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah. But if the Republicans had stayed with their original position, which was 24 Senators on Chafee's bill that called for mandates, the middle would have been where it started off. And I think that one of the big disappointments is that they didn't mean what they said (inaudible).

Q So, I mean, this is a moment in time. How do you -- I mean, how do you honestly see it and your chances of (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: I think the chances are pretty good. I really do. I think that we are very close to winning the mandate vote, which will be the real political test. We need 49 Democrats because we have Jeffords. And I think we are very close to that.

My big problem now is the one (inaudible) said when I came in. If CBO doesn't score the House bills, they can't get to the floor. That was not in the game plan. That would be yet another obstacle, because if you can't get those bills scored -- you know, I mean, I don't know that the House will withstand the pressure, if all they're doing is sitting around waiting for CBO, not to go ahead and go on recess. I mean, I think the leadership will be just deluged by angry spouses and children who are waiting to go on vacation.

Q Do we have a prediction as to when CBO might do (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Not as of this afternoon. I -- you know, I was -- I thought they had scored the Ways and Means bill. I guess I just missed that they had. And so I didn't see that scoring the Gephardt bill was that big a deal because there's something (inaudible) Ways and Means Committee.

And the problem is, with this whole CBO nonsense, is that you can run the same computer runs at OMB. You can run the same computer runs at the Urban Institute. Those are the three places in the country where you can run the computer runs. Why don't they just farm it out to OMB and the Urban Institute to get the job done?

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Q Mm-hmm. I'd say, except for that, though.

MRS. CLINTON: But that's a big -- I mean, that's a big problem.

Q When did this become a realization of how serious (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: I got -- I mean, I got off the phone right before I came in here.

Q Oh, really.

MRS. CLINTON: Yes. Yeah. I mean, there may have been somebody else in the White House who knew it, but nobody had told me about it.

Q Was it a leadership conversation you had or --

MRS. CLINTON: (Inaudible) I don't think Dick Gephardt knew until today. Because you know what I think happened -- this is, I'm speculating here. What happened is that the bill was up there, and I think the House leadership had every reason to believe it was going through the process.

But what happened is that the Senate Finance Committee never really finished drafting its bill, and they, basically, gobbled up a lot of CBO's time for the first couple of weeks, and in fact, redrafted the bill to try to get better scoring than they thought they could get.

So Mitchell comes in in the middle of that process with a bill similar to the Senate Finance Committee bill. So they just kept trying to finish the Senate Finance Committee bill so that they could then move over into the Mitchell bill. And I think what Dick and others thought is that, yeah, they were working on the Senate bill, but they were also working on our bill.

Q You would think.

MRS. CLINTON: Turns out that was not the case.

Q So the leadership (inaudible). Are they alarmed about getting something in time? Is that what you're (inaudible)?

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MRS. CLINTON: I don't know about that. That is something that -- I mean, I think that everybody is working as hard as they can, but --

Q It's just been one surprise after another.

MRS. CLINTON: It sure has for me.

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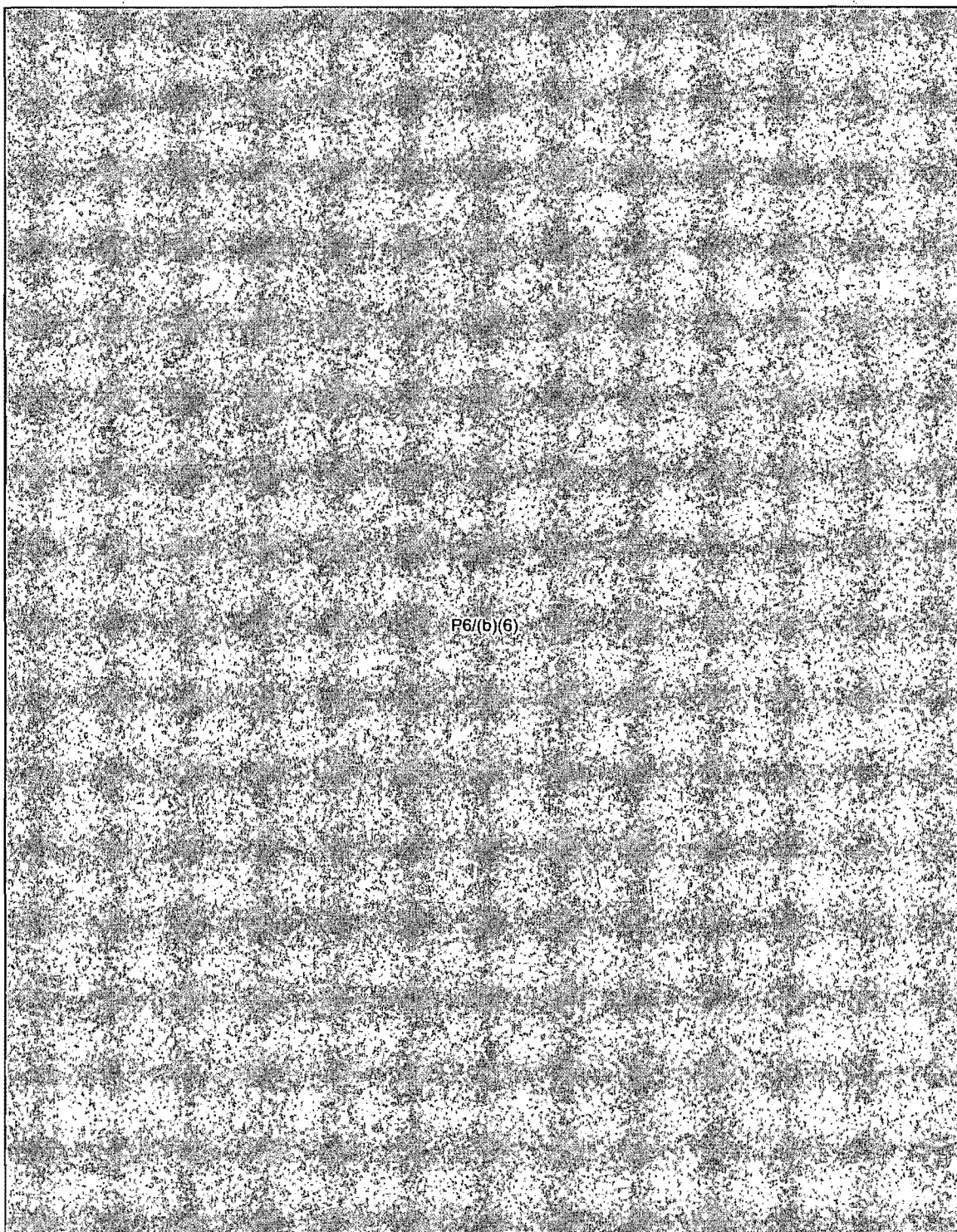
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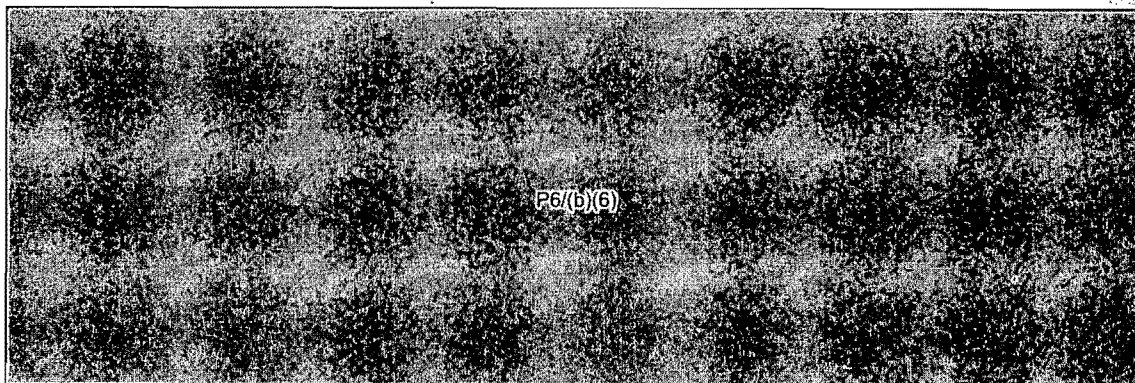
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Q So am I correct in thinking you weren't really thinking about much of a legislative program, but it's more maintenance and --

MRS. CLINTON: Well, it's implementation. I mean, part of what we've been doing out in the government -- I mean, these cabinet officers. We had two Harvard government department gurus, Newstaff (phonetic) and another real great name in American political science, come and have dinner with the Cabinet a few months ago, and they said it was by far the best Cabinet that any president had put together in a very, very long time, the best in terms of productivity and ideas as well as collegiality.

And they are out there doing amazing things, which nobody knows about, because we haven't had time to highlight them. We haven't put them into a pattern, and that's a great group of people.

So just the idea of being able to slow down and really explain to the American people what they're getting for their tax dollar for a change. You know, show them that, you know, reinventing government wasn't just a slogan. We're actually doing it. Take a lot of the legislative initiatives and help people understand how it's going to help their lives. It's not just something that they hear about on the news.

That is very exciting, because, really, the legislative program was just a step on the way to not only showing results in people's lives, but reinvigorating the sense of governing so that people could have some confidence that we could solve our problems.

Q (Inaudible)? I think it would be very

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interesting.

MRS. CLINTON: I think it's going to be exciting. I mean, I don't know if you've looked at like the education legislation, but it is landmark.

Q I have. I'm one of the few weirdos who have.
Yeah.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, and I mean -- I worked on it --

Q (Inaudible) lifelong learning agenda.

MRS. CLINTON: Oh. See. Right before he -- Bill decided to run for president, I was working on that whole lifetime learning agenda and actually drafted a bill that was before the Kennedy Committee about apprenticeship and other things for kids. Nobody thought it had a chance, you know, in 1990, I guess. We've taken that whole agenda. We've changed the way Chapter One is going to operate, put in Goals 2000, on and on and on.

Well, when Americans find out about that they're very excited, but most of them don't know. So getting that news out and getting it implemented right -- if you look at some of the stuff that Henry Cisneros is doing. It's revolutionary. And, I mean, the faster we could move toward changing the whole concept of public housing, the better off the country would be, and it would prove that we were really doing things differently.

You know, go down through every single department. I mean, procurement, which is a boring issue, we are making more changes. And we have a legislative initiative on procurement that could revolutionize the way that the Pentagon does business and save us billions of dollars. Those are all things that, once people know about, they will be wildly popular.

And I would rather be in this President's position -- all of that new information to give to the electorate starting this November where, I happen to believe, we're going to do better than the pessimists have said, but then moving into the next two years.

So that every time they hit us, we highlight

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something we've done. And we say, "Look at what -- " and then show Jim Leach's picture and D'Amato's picture and Gramm's picture and Dole's picture. All of them saying no or snarling into the camera and, you know, talking about irrelevancies about what George said to Josh. I mean, you know, give me a break. Right?

And then we say, while they've been doing this, here's what we've been doing. We've been changing the way public housing works so Mrs. Jones now has an equity interest. Do you know what that means? She takes care of where she lives, and she's proud to have her children there. And we've been changing the way welfare works, and we've been giving kids who don't go to four-year colleges a chance to get an education.

I mean, I think we are so well positioned, having gone through the incredible trial by fire we have been through. We are at about 50 percent. You know, 47 to 51 percent in whatever polls you look at. To be at about 50 percent -- when you've gone through what we've gone through, when you've fought as many battles, when you've taken as much grief, and to have a story to tell that has not been heard by people -- it's a pretty good position to be in.

So I'm basically -- I'm angry at the kind of stuff we've had to put up with and the outrageousness of it. But politically, I think, we're in good shape for the long run, and that's what, you know, you have to look at.

Q Maybe I'll write about the next two years.

MRS. CLINTON: Hey, good.

Q Well, because it's interesting, what you are saying about doing with it, and it is a big (inaudible). But also seeing a President play that role for once.

MRS. CLINTON: Yeah. I mean -- you know, I have images about, you know, we get the crime bill, and we start to implement community policing. When Mayor Lanier in Houston implemented community policing, he saved money because he actually hired police, which cut overtime, which actually saved money. He had more police on the street.

The crime rate began going down. His popularity

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went to 90 percent. I mean, he was reelected with, I think, over 80 percent of the vote.

And what he -- he didn't do anything else his first term except straighten out the way police officers were deployed and used in the city of Houston. And I see the President going from city to city -- are you doing it, are you doing it right, have you talked to Lanier in Houston, who knows how to do it, have you -- you know. And so people can relate to the governing, not just the legislating and the politicking.

And that's what my husband cares about. I mean, that's why he loved being a governor all those years. He loved solving problems. And getting the legislation passed is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of actually solving the problem.

Q Okay. (Inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. (Inaudible.)

(End of interview.)

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