

**JEWISH PRESS  
TELECONFERENCE WITH HILLARY CLINTON  
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**Moderator: Marc Ginsberg  
Deputy Press Secretary**

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Good morning, everyone. I guess I want to start by wishing all of you on behalf of Bill and myself a healthy and happy new year and to maybe spend just a minute or two talking about the campaign and what we are finding as we travel around. We are very excited by the reception we are receiving. We just completed another bus tour through Florida and I just am absolutely convinced that people are ready for a change; they are willing to be hopeful and take responsibility again. We are especially pleased by the overwhelming outpouring of support from our friends in the Jewish community and are very grateful for the help in many different communities we are receiving.

I hope that as we talk for the rest of this conference call and throughout this campaign that the reasons why we believe all Americans should support the Clinton-Gore campaign but I would stress particularly the American-Jewish community will become very clear to everyone so that when they vote on November 3rd, they will be voting on a very positive agenda and set of reasons for making this change. Among those reasons are the economic proposals, education and health care proposals that Bill and Al are promoting and, in specific terms, also the kind of inclusive nondiscriminatory country that they see as the kind of ideal that we should be striving to achieve in America. And additionally, the support for a strong foreign policy that particularly puts forth America's values that promote democracy, human rights and underscores our traditional commitment to Israel. I think that the kind of personal experience that Bill and I have had, for example, in our visit to Israel a few years back and other kinds of contact we have had, particularly in my case, through the importing of the HIPPA program to Arkansas has certainly strengthened our views and I think would be undergirding any kind of position that Bill would take as president. So with those introductory words, I would be happy to answer your questions.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

Hillary, I am going to call on each journalist and they understand that they will be able to ask one question and if we have time, we'll try for a second round. Kim Moore, JTA.

**KIM MOORE (Jewish Telegraphic Agency):**

Good morning, Mrs. Clinton. When you were president of the New World Foundation, the organization made a \$15,000 grant to GrassRoots International which in turn funded two PLO organizations in the West Bank. First of all, how big was the foundation, how much money did it oversee? And second, should Jewish voters care that this happened, and if not, why not?

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Kim, I don't really remember how much money it had. It's a Foundation that gives very small grants. I don't believe they give grants above \$20,000 or \$25,000. As I recall, the grant was made for \$10,000 to GrassRoots International for a specific project in South Africa. That was what the grant was approved for. I never knew any different until somebody came up with this story during this campaign. I have no other information for that. It was supposed to go for medical services in South Africa. If it was diverted, I knew nothing about it. To this day, I know nothing about it other than the media stories.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

Jim Besser (Baltimore Jewish Times).

**JIM BESSER:**

Mrs. Clinton, since the campaign began in earnest, the right wing of the Republican Party, Republican evangelical in particular, made you the special focus of their attacks on the Democratic ticket. I am wondering how that kind of attack makes you feel personally and also, whether you could tell us how you feel about this mixing of religion and politics which seem the central threat of many of these attacks.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Well, you know, Mr. Besser, I find it both regrettable and frightening. I think that it is a tactic designed to divide Americans, to undermine the constitutional guarantees of both religious freedom and separation of church and state. I think it is a deliberate, cynical, negative political strategy that was pursued in its most public way at the Republican Convention in which not only the platform that was adopted but the speakers who were selected, launched the kind of right wing attack on fundamental American values that I had hoped we had outgrown and would not see in a major political party in this country ever again.

I was personally quite worried by the talk of religious war, the kind of rhetoric used by people like Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson which was never repudiated but implicitly accepted by the leaders of the Republican Party and the Bush Administration. Now

personally, I found it very difficult to take seriously because the attacks on me were so unfounded and untrue that it was difficult to take them personally because I viewed them as part of this cynical political strategy. I regretted it and I thought it was sad, but I am more concerned about the tone that it sets, about the implicit encouragement it gives to people to give vent to discriminatory and other attitudes that are undergirding a resurgence of hate crimes and the kinds of problems that we see in this country. So I found it very frightening and it reinforced my belief in this election year that this election is really about not only the future of this country and any kind of programmatic way, but about its basic values and as I said in New York last week, I really view it as a struggle for the soul of this country and I mean that very seriously. I think we are being challenged as we have not been challenged in about 30 or 40 years to reaffirm basic commitments to the values that this country was created on and that we should be spending our time on trying to promote and not undermine.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

David Twirsky (The Forward -- New York).

**DAVID TWIRSKY:**

Mrs. Clinton, several press reports throughout the campaign about your own role inside of the campaign raised speculation early on, not lately, about any possible role for you in a Clinton administration, you have a paper trail of very articulate passionate and persuasive views on vital domestic issues, but there has also been and one wonders about whether you might make some special contribution or think about that in a Clinton administration if it should come to pass. One wonders also about the stories about most recently referred to, I think, by the New Republic about three weeks ago, and that kind of "firm" and its 1995 and let's look back at the first two years of the Clinton administration where he referred to a kind of juicy way to Hillary Clinton's friend inside the administration as the "firm."

There's the story about that the threat to resign by the four people whose \_\_\_\_\_ was vetoed by Susan Thomases and there have been repeated stories from within the campaign about tensions between people who, for the lack of a better term, might be wedded to a more liberal left strategy, electorally and programmatically. I am wondering if you could comment on these.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

David, I listened with some amazement at that, I have no idea where they came from and have no basis for believing that they are anything except the fervid imagination of people who are looking to create conflict. I have to say and I am really proud to say this, I have been in lots of very intense and stressful experiences in my 20 or 22 years of adulthood and I have never worked with a more collegial, more open, more inclusive group of people than the ones my husband has compiled for this election campaign. I have to confess that in some

In addition, my husband has also made it very clear that he supports choice and would do everything as president he could to try to assure that basic right for women and would repeal the gag rule, permit the use of RUF 486 and other contraceptive treatments that perhaps could avoid the difficult problem of choice for many women and generally be much more sensitive to the very painful and complex issues posed by this personal choice. And finally with respect to AIDs, you are right, that unfortunately the faster growing population for diagnosis for HIV and AIDs includes women and neither the Reagan nor the Bush Administration has focused on trying to treat women because their symptoms as well as the progression of the disease is somewhat different now we believe from that in men and to try to do what is necessary to take this epidemic in a direct way to try to prevent its further spread as well as its extraordinary cost.

Finally, the Clinton-Gore health care proposal which I spoke about yesterday in Denver will very much support proposals that will help all Americans to stay healthier by focusing on primary and preventive health care, but will have particular emphasis on such treatment as prenatal care for pregnant women, immunizations and other care for children and the kinds of treatment that will actually save us money as well as prevent untold human problems.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

Hillary, I think you really have run out of time unless you have time for one more question.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

No, they tell me I have and that I have to go to a meeting here before my speech at the University of Akron.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

So you are out of time.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

I am but I have really enjoyed this.

**(Reporter):**

Mrs. Clinton, we ran a story on HIPPA today.

ways, I suppose it's a compliment to be accused of having so much influence, but I think that comes from people who do not know how my husband operates or how effective he is at bringing people together to reach consensus. You know during his time as governor and during his work on the national scene with the Governors Association and the Education Commission of the States and drafting the national education goals, he had a capacity to listen to people who come from what traditionally would be called different faces on the political spectrum, although I think that language and even that kind of thinking is quickly becoming out of date and I hope it does, because it is not a very useful construct any longer. But certainly in the past, Bill's capacity to reach out and include people has been remarkable and his ability then to synthesize different points of view, to come up with his own decision, I think really marks him as a leader who is unafraid of smart people, of people with different points of view.

So I am proud, I guess, of being included of any journalist's assessment of those who might have had a role to play, but I would caution anyone who writes such a story that it has got to be a very, very big group, because my husband is someone who literally will reach out across all kinds of lines that have traditionally divided people, to seek advice and to include people as advisors.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

Harriett Kessler (The Jewish Community Voice -- New Jersey).

**HARRIETT KESSLER:**

Mrs. Clinton, you are known specifically for your great interest in children. Could you give us some idea of your views towards educational choice and prayer in school.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

I could barely hear you, Mrs. Kessler, but I think you asked about educational choice and prayer in school.

**HARRIETT KESSLER:**

Right.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

My husband favors public school choice but does not favor extending tax credits or vouchers for private school and he was the second governor in the whole country to promote public school choice and will do so as president, because he believes it is critical that we try to shore up public education in any way possible in the next four years before we do have a collapse of the public school system which is or, at least traditionally, has been the primary

conveyor of the values that hold this pluralistic society together. With respect to prayer in the schools, my husband has always opposed any effort to mandate prayer or mandate any particular sectarian prayer but has been open to looking for ways that values that are represented by prayer could be promoted. It is a difficult line to walk and no one, I think, is adequately confident that it can be walked in the right manner so as not to impinge upon legitimate concerns about separation of church and state, but there does seem to be some effort that is going on now to try to come up with some approaches that would permit along the lines of the recent Supreme Court decision extracurricular activities in public schools concerning religion and the like. Perhaps something like that, but only on the basis of keeping the separation and preventing any mandatory prayer.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

Andrea Jacobs (Cleveland Jewish News).

**ANDREA JACOBS:**

Hello, Mrs. Clinton. This is about women's health. You were just in Denver yesterday.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Right, had a wonderful time, too.

**ANDREA JACOBS:**

Major medical studies are rarely conducted with women as a subject. Choice is threatened right now. A lot of times doctors don't test women for HIV, they just kinda leave it out of the diagnosis. I am curious, what are your primary concerns as a woman towards furthering the health of other women.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Well, you raised some very important issues and what Bill and Al and Tipper and I have been saying for several months now is that the research approach undertaken by the National Institutes of Health and other government research for the last twelve years has indeed left women out. Left them out of protocols for experiments, left them out of research on drugs, has not focused on a lot of the illnesses that are particularly women's health problems, such as breast cancer and osteoporosis and ovarian cancer and that there has to be a change in those priorities that will begin to provide women with not only better treatment but better access. And that will be a primary stress in the Clinton-Gore health care reform package.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Oh, terrific, thank you. Thank you so much. I would love to see it. I am so proud of that program. I have often told my Israeli friends that it's one of Israel's best exports and I want to do everything I can to highlight it when Bill is president.

**(Reporter):**

We are very taken with the fact that the next president is someone who not only sees the value of Israel as a democracy and a strategic ally but as a social laboratory as well.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Well, you know it's funny you should say that. I just got a letter from a dear friend of mine whom I worked with at Yale when he was a medical resident, who is now a physician in one of the major health clinics in Israel and he and I have corresponded over the years as to the lessons that could be exchanged. I do see that as a real opportunity.

**MARC GINSBERG:**

Hillary, we thank you so much for your time and everyone appreciates it.

**HILLARY CLINTON:**

Thank you all very much for your interest and we not only really appreciate any support you can give the campaign before the election, but your ideas and suggestions so that we can make this a real presidency for all Americans again.