

**CAMPAIGN FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE**

**TAKE BACK AMERICA 2007**

**REMARKS OF  
SENATOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON (D-NY)**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2007**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

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(Cheers, applause.)

SEN. CLINTON: Thank you. Good morning! (Cheers, applause.)

Are you ready to take back America? (Cheers, applause.) Well, I'm ready to, and I'm so pleased to be here with so many people who share our goals about making sure that we get our country back.

I want to thank my friend Ellen Malcolm. You know, in a very real way, I'm not sure I'd be standing here, running for president, if Ellen Malcolm hadn't had the idea for EMILY's List and elected so many Democratic women. (Cheers, applause.)

I want to thank Roger Hickey and Bob Borosage and all of you for keeping this movement going, because -- make no mistake about it -- we have a lot of work to do. You know, later today, apparently, the president will veto a bill passed by Congress to support stem cell research. (Booing.) Now, this is research that -- you can tell by the response -- you know holds such promise for devastating diseases.

Yesterday I met with a group of children suffering from juvenile diabetes. I co-chair the Alzheimer's Caucus in the Senate. I've worked on helping to boost funding for research to look for cures and a way to prevent so many devastating diseases. And we know that stem cell research holds the key to our understanding more about what we can do.

So let me very clear. When I am president, I will lift the ban on stem cell research. (Cheers, applause.)

This is just one example of how the president puts ideology before science --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

SEN. CLINTON: -- politics before the needs of our families --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

SEN. CLINTON: -- just one more example of how out of touch with reality he and his party have become. (Applause.)

And it's just one more example as to why we're going to send them packing in January 2009 and return progressive leadership to the White House. (Cheers, applause.)

And I know that you're going to be on the front lines making that happen. Because after the six-and-a-half years and, by the end of 2008, the eight years of this administration, we are ready and looking for the kind of leadership and citizenship that will make a difference in America again. Because it's not just leadership that we have to focus on. It's what you're doing. It's your activism.

It is the organizations that have been formed in the last six-and-a-half years to give voice to the great movement that you're part of. From the Campaign for America's Future to the Center for American Progress, from Media Matters to MoveOn, your voices have made a difference in the debate. Because of you we now have a Democratic majority, and we need to grow that Democratic majority. (Cheers, applause.)

But it's not always just the headlines that demonstrate how seriously off track we are in America. I want to talk to you about a woman by the name of Lilly Ledbetter. Now Lilly Ledbetter worked at the Firestone plant in Gadsden, Alabama for nearly 20 years. She was the only woman working as a supervisor and, to be honest about it, she wasn't treated very well. She was harassed; she was subjected to demeaning comments. But she persevered, because it was a good job for a woman in Alabama to help support her family, and she stuck it out.

Toward the end of her time at Firestone, she made a shocking discovery: She had never been paid the same as the other man holding the same position, doing the same job as she was. She was paid less, even for people who had come on the job later than she and who were junior to her, so she did something very brave. She brought a lawsuit against the company under the Equal Pay Act, and the evidence was overwhelming, and she won.

But the company appealed to the Supreme Court. And just a few weeks ago, reversing 40 years of legal precedent, the Supreme Court, with the two justices appointed by President Bush, ruled against Lilly Ledbetter.

They said she hadn't filed her case in time. Well, we're going to try to fix that in the Congress and fill that loophole. (Cheers, applause.)

But when you still meet people who say politics doesn't matter, that elections don't matter, that we're all the same -- and I hear it, and I know you do, too -- remind them about somebody named Lilly Ledbetter. And talk to them about all of the issues where a change in leadership, where different people appointed to our courts would make a huge difference in the lives of people doing the very best they can in America. (Applause.)

Because too many people today, they feel like they're invisible to their government. They're working as hard as they can. All they're asking for is to be given a fair chance to go as far as they can go and to give their kids a chance. And that's what we always believed we had in America, didn't we? But now people feel invisible. And not only do they feel invisible, they have reason to believe that they are being rendered invisible.

You know, our Constitution is being shredded. We know about the secret wiretaps, we know about the secret military tribunals, the secret White House e-mail accounts. We've seen U.S. attorneys fired to silence them because they didn't bring bogus lawsuits against Democrats during election years. We've seen government scientists silenced, information taken off of government websites. We've seen retaliation against those in the government who stood up to this administration.

We all watched, stunned and heartsick, as a natural disaster was turned into a national disgrace along our Gulf Coast after Katrina. We saw families stranded while their government paid no attention to them and was late in coming to help. We had to give a special DVD to the president to pay attention while bodies were floating down the streets of New Orleans.

And we know -- (applause) -- we know that the war in Iraq has been catastrophic for our country and for our position in the world. It has taken a human toll beyond measure.

And it is honestly hard to believe that one of these things could happen in America, but all of them have. It is a stunning record of secrecy and corruption, of cronyism run amok. It is everything our founders were afraid of, everything our Constitution was designed to prevent. And our families have paid the price. They're the ones who are struggling with rising costs and falling wages. They're working harder than ever in the last six years. Productivity, which measures how hard Americans work, because we are the hardest-working people in the world, has gone up 18 percent, but the average family income has fallen \$1,300.

We have now more than 45 million people living without health care, and millions more who are underinsured. And what does that mean? Well, you have an insurance policy, except when your doctors say you need a certain treatment and the insurance companies say, "Just kidding."

We know that we have 12 million children living in poverty. We have more people going bankrupt last year than graduating from college.

Yet these are all invisible to the president and his administration. If you're one of those 75,000 households still living in trailers -- and I visited one a few weeks ago. It was hot. It was stuffy. You can't even imagine that the elderly woman whose home I visited, who invited me into that FEMA trailer, could have lived there now for nearly two years. Well, she and all the thousands of others are invisible.

And we know that for those who worry about passing on this huge debt that has been blown up in the last six years -- because remember, six years ago we had a balanced budget and a surplus -- (cheers, applause) -- well, if you're a grandparent worried about passing that debt on to your grandchildren, you're invisible.

If you're a single mom getting up every day trying to keep body and soul together, going to work, maybe even going to school in addition to work, looking for child care -- it's unaffordable, it's unavailable, the quality is not there for you -- you're invisible.

If you're a hard-working student from a middle class or working family who wants to go to college, and you've seen that the price of college has gone up faster than nearly anything else in our society, and there are not enough scholarships based on need anymore and not enough assistance, and you have to go and borrow -- it's not like when I borrowed money way back when I went to school. I could borrow from the federal government at 2 percent interest. Now you're going to get ripped off by a student loan company. (Cheers, applause.) The interest rate's going to be changed

on you. You're never sure how much you're going to owe and when you have to pay it back. (Applause.)

And most unbelievably of all, if you're a soldier who has served our country and you have come home wounded or injured, and you're hoping to get the health care and the compensation for your disability that you deserve to have, and you're warehoused in some unacceptable facility at Walter Reed or you're shuffled through the system or you're told your medical records have been lost -- well, it turns out you're invisible too.

Well, I want every American to know that their needs and their lives are not invisible to this group and they're not invisible to me, and they won't be invisible to the next president of the United States. (Cheers, applause.)

What we need is a new progressive vision for the 21st century. And we have a lot of historical examples going back in time in our own country, from both Republicans and Democrats. You know, it was Teddy Roosevelt who said the welfare of each of us is dependent fundamentally upon the welfare of all of us. That seems to have been forgotten, hasn't it? But what we're going to do is create a progressive governing coalition again.

I believe that the foundation of a strong economy doesn't begin with giving people who are already privileged and wealthy even more benefits. I think it comes from shared prosperity. And we need to get back to creating new, good jobs for our people again, because if we don't have a new generator of jobs in America, we're not going to keep moving people toward the American dream.

And I think we have to do that by setting big goals for our country. Let's start by cleaning up the government, replacing this culture of corruption and cronyism with a culture of competence and caring again. (Applause.)

Let's stop outsourcing critical government functions to private companies that overcharge and underperform! (Cheers, applause.) Let's close the revolving door between government and the lobbying shop, and let's end the no-bid contracts for Halliburton and the other well-connected companies! (Cheers, applause.) And how about the radical idea of appointing people who are actually qualified for the positions that we ask them to hold for us! (Cheers, applause.)

Well, when I'm president, the entrance to the White House will no longer be a revolving door for the well connected, but a door of opportunity for the well qualified. We're going to enlist young people once again serving their government. I have proposed a public service academy, just like our military academy. (Cheers, applause.) Let's start sending young people to school to serve America in another way!

Second, as part of our progressive agenda, let's finally do something about the growing economic inequality that is tearing our country apart. (Applause.) In 1965, the average American CEO made 24 times more than the typical worker. By 2005, they made 262 times more. At the same time, the top 1 percent of our households held 22 percent of our nation's wealth. That is the highest concentration of wealth in a very small number of people since 1929, which was not a good year for America. So let's close that gap. Let's start holding corporate America responsible, make

them pay their fair share again. Enough with the corporate welfare. Enough with the golden parachutes. (Cheers, applause.) And enough with the tax incentives for companies to shift jobs overseas. We have to make sure there's not a single benefit that they would get for doing that. (Applause.)

And let's make sure the people who work hard every day can actually support their families and save for the future. That means standing up for our unions again -- (cheers, applause) -- understanding that there's a connection between unions and the middle class.

When I'm president, we're going to stand up for unions. We're going to make sure they can organize for fair wages and good working conditions. And we're going to appoint people to the Department of Labor who are actually pro-labor for a change. (Cheers, applause.)

Third on our progressive agenda, let's make sure every single American has the most fundamental benefit there is. It is not a privilege, it is a right -- quality affordable health care for every single man, woman and child in America. (Cheers, applause.) For 6- 1/2 years, we've been moving backwards, not forwards, on health care.

I want to be able to put forth not just a plan, but the political coalition and consensus to get such a plan adopted in our country. I've been down this road before, as some of you may recall. And as I often say, I've got the scars to show for it. It only makes me more determined that we're going to get it done when I'm president. (Cheers, applause.)

And we need to be able to look every American in the eye, particularly those who are suffering, those who are caring for family members with disabilities, those who know the anguish of sitting at the bedside of a sick child, that if we could find more than half a trillion dollars for the war in Iraq, we can find the money to make sure everybody gets the health care they deserve to have. (Applause.)

Fourth, let's recommit ourselves to the idea that every young person in America has the right to a high-quality education, from pre- school all the way through college. (Cheers, applause). I have proposed universal pre-kindergarten for every 4-year-old. (Applause.) If we provide that, the evidence is overwhelming, children will stay in school longer, they will do better, and they'll stay out of trouble. Because you know what? There are states in our country who actually plan how many prison beds they will need by looking at third grade reading scores. They look at the failure rates and they extrapolate how many prison spots they're going to need in 10 to 15 years. Well, I think it is time that we had a real debate about that. And I, for one, would much rather pay for pre-kindergarten than for more prison beds. Let's keep kids on the right track and out of the prison system. (Cheers, applause.) Fifth, how about standing up for science and supporting scientists again? (Cheers, applause.) Because if we expect to retain our economic lead in the world and to have an improving standard of living and quality of life for Americans that then will spill over and help people around the world, we can't disregard scientific research, we can't suppress scientific evidence, we can't manipulate scientific advice, we can't politicize scientific panels -- all of which this administration has done.

On everything from stem cell research to global warming to Plan B contraception, the president has worked to turn Washington, D.C., into an evidence-free zone. (Applause.) And because of that, facts have been subordinated to opinions and beliefs.

I think we've had enough. There is no conflict between faith and science, and what we need to do -- (interrupted by cheers, applause) -- is let scientists do their job free from manipulation, distortion and ideology within an ethical and moral frame work. We're capable of doing that, and we must do that because we're going to not only lose economic opportunities, but we're going to deny people the right to have a clean environment, to possibly save our planet, to be good stewards of God's creation. And we're going to see people suffer needlessly.

So this is not just about science, this is about life and the quality of life and the world in which we live together. We're going to stand up for the rights to do everything that is possible to make it clear that we will protect your most basic citizenship, responsibility and constitutional rights, the right to vote. It is time we stood up and said, "Enough." (Cheers, applause.)

In the past two presidential elections, we saw people turned away from the polls or discouraged from voting. We saw ballots mysteriously lost in state after state. It is inconceivable that in 2007 African Americans would have to wait in line for 10 hours to vote, while whites in the affluent precinct next door waited 10 minutes; or that students at a college would be fundamentally discriminated against and not given their right to vote by being denied even the right to register or the equipment that they would need to do so. (Cheers, applause.)

That is why I've introduced the Count Every Vote Act in the Senate because I want to make sure that we are not embarrassed again as a nation. We are the oldest democracy in the world, and we need to act like it and restore integrity to our electoral process. Our democracy requires nothing less.

Finally, four long years after our president stood on that aircraft carrier and declared "mission accomplished," we're going to end the war in Iraq and finally bring our troops home. (Cheers, applause.)

Now, as some of you know, I voted against the supplemental last month because I believe the best way to support our troops is finally to start bringing them home and out of this sectarian civil war that we have no business being part of. The American military has done its job. Look at what they accomplished. They got rid of Saddam Hussein, they gave the Iraqis a chance for free and fair elections, they gave the Iraqi government the chance to begin to demonstrate that it understood its responsibilities to make the hard political decisions necessary to give the people of Iraq a better future. So the American military has succeeded. It is the Iraqi government which has failed to make the tough decisions that are important for their own people. (Cheers, applause.)

Now, you know, I -- (interrupted by cheers) -- now, you know, I -- I love coming here every year. (Laughter.) I see the signs "Lead us out of Iraq now." That is what we are trying to do. I have joined with one of the most -- (interrupted by cheers, applause) -- I have joined with one of the most skilled leaders in the Senate, Senator Byrd from West Virginia, to sponsor legislation to

deauthorize this war. The point of our proposal is very simple: To end the president's authority for the war and force him to seek new authority.

If he thinks that he can get any kind of authority through the Congress, I think that he's mistaken. (Applause.)

But we need to end the authority that he is currently operating under, in order to strip him of the legitimacy of going forward with his policy. (Cheers, applause.)

Now you know -- now when I -- you know, when I'm president, we are going to have a different foreign policy. We're going to start talking to people again. We're going to start rebuilding our alliances again. (Cheers, applause.)

There is no problem we face that we could face alone, whether it's global terrorism or global warming or HIV/AIDS or bird flu, you name it. We've got to have friends and allies. That means talking to people we don't agree with. (Applause.) That means reaching across those divides, sometimes dealing with people we don't have anything in common with. (Applause continues.) But we have seen in the past what happens when we engage the world and lead by the power of our ideals.

Now, will it be easy? Of course not. But when I think of the challenges we face, I'm reminded of a story that my friend and our former secretary of State Madeleine Albright told me. In 1995, she was asked to go to Europe to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. And as some of you may know, she was born in the former Czechoslovakia. Her family dealt with Naziism and communism. So for her, this was a personal, nostalgic trip to go back and be part of that commemoration.

She traveled throughout Europe, particularly behind what used to be called the Iron Curtain. And everywhere she went, she saw American flags.

But when she looked more closely, she realized the flags had only 48 stars. And she asked people, "Where did these flags come from?" And everyone told her the same thing. When the American GIs liberated Europe, they passed out these flags. Because, of course, this was before Hawaii and Alaska were states, that's why there were only 48 stars.

And the people who received these flags had guarded them, passing them on from grandparent to parent to child, often at great risk, because if, under the Soviet occupation, they had been found with an American flag, they could have gotten into serious trouble. So Madeleine asked them, "Why did you save these flags, at risk to your families, over all these years?" And the answer was the same: "Because we love America, and we love America's values, and we hoped someday we could live like Americans."

I want to be the president who restores that feeling about our country around the world and - - (extended cheers, applause) -- and equally importantly, I want to restore that feeling here at home. (Cheers, applause.)

I believe we are a good and great nation. After all those years, those people far away didn't give up on our ideals, and neither should we. And I hope that you will join with me, join with us. America is not only ready for change; America's ready to become what we know it is: a place that holds out hope and opportunity for all.

Let's make it happen. Together we can renew the promise of America at home and restore respect for America around the world.

Thank you all, and God bless you. (Cheers, applause.)

(END)