

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLORADO FORUM'S CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY BREAKFAST
DENVER, COLORADO
MAY 22, 1996

TALKING POINTS

[Acknowledgments: Gayle Clapper, Executive Director of the Colorado Forum; Stephanie O'Malley, daughter of Denver Mayor Wellington Webb; Colorado Forum; and the children's advocates in attendance]

- ☒ ~~Good morning.~~ ^{*It's a privilege*} I am so happy to be here in Colorado -- a place where so many people are committed to making this state the very best place for parents to raise their children.
- ☒ I recently had the pleasure of meeting with some of the members of the Colorado Forum at the White House. I was impressed with your work on welfare and family issues, particularly your ability to put a human face on our national debate over welfare reform.
- ☒ I want to thank all of you here this morning for your commitment and dedication on behalf of children. Every day you are listening to children, learning about the challenges they face, and working toward solutions.
- ☒ That is what Governor Romer's Children's Conference is all about. We need to encourage parents, schools, churches, city councils, and business to work together on behalf of our children.
- ☒ Parents have the primary responsibility for their children, but they cannot become the best parents they can be without help and support of their community.
- ☒ These days, we know more about what children need to develop into successful adults than ever before. But there are too few organized ways of getting the information to parents who need it most.
- ☒ I'm hoping that today's Conference will help do just that. It is an opportunity for politicians, business leaders, advocates, parents -- and most importantly -- children themselves, to discuss frankly the challenges facing us and to share our ideas about meeting those challenges. It is a chance to determine what is working for our children, and what can be done to replicate these positive efforts throughout the state and our nation.
- ☒ There is no subject more important, no issue that should be more decisive, than how we see and treat our children.

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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR COLORADO LISTENS TO KIDS
DENVER, CO
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[Acknowledgments: Dean Wolf, Executive Vice-President of Auraria Campus; Colorado Children's Chorale; Bertha Lynn, moderator; Reverend Woolfolk, who will give an invocation]

Thank-you Governor Romer for your heartfelt and inspiring remarks and for that very kind introduction. I also want to thank you for inviting me to ~~Colorado~~ to join in this important conversation with and about our children.

I am so happy to be here in Colorado -- a place where so many people from the Governor to business leaders to teachers are committed to making their state the very best place for parents to raise children. And it seems that you are already well on your way to achieving this crucial goal. I want to congratulate this state for being named by Working Mother magazine as first in the nation in your commitment to child care and as one of the top ten states for child care.

You know, Colorado, like every other state in this country, has never been immune to the diverse challenges facing American children and their families. But here, in Denver, in Boulder, in communities large and small across this state, solutions to these problems are being discovered and proposed. And often parents, schools, churches, city councils and businesses are all working together on behalf our children to turn these solutions and proposals into reality.

I know that the Governor and the state government have been working very closely with business and non-governmental organizations to promote family-friendly initiatives -- from cheaper and better child care to mentorships for new parents to health care coverage for children all across Colorado. These partnerships are crucial. I believe with all my heart that the best way we can help our children is for all of us -- from all sectors of our society -- to work together on their behalf.

Parents have the primary responsibility for their children, but they cannot become the best parents they can be without the community -- the village's -- help. They must rely on their employers for fair wages and the flexibility to fulfill the duties of childrearing. At some time or another parents need help from the government -- whether it's a police officer patrolling the neighborhood, a college loan, or God-forbid, assistance with medical bills.

The title of my book is taken from an old African proverb,

"It Takes a Village to Raise a Child." Its truth is proven each day as generations of children learn habits and values not just at home, but in classrooms, playgrounds, day care centers, and neighborhood streets; from grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends; and, like it or not, from TV shows, commercials and movies.

As a modern society, we know more about what children need to develop than ever before. But we still have too few organized ways of supporting parents in the most important work they do. We have not figured out how to replace the extended family, clan or village that looked out for children in earlier times. As a result, many parents don't get the information or the help they need to become the best possible mothers and fathers they can be.

I'm hoping that today's conversation will be just that -- a conversation that will allow all of us -- politicians, business leaders, advocates, parents and most importantly, the children themselves -- to discuss frankly the challenges facing us and to share our ideas for meeting these challenges. This is not a policy conference where we analyze what's wrong and bad with our society. It is an opportunity to determine what is right for our children -- what initiatives really work to help all of our children fulfill their God-given potential -- and what can be done to replicate these positive efforts throughout the state and the country.

Please don't be shy today. What each of us says here is important, because when it comes to children, we all have experience -- and we can all claim a kind of expertise. We have all been children. We all love our children. We all have visions and aspirations for what they can become. We think of and talk about them constantly, during coffee breaks, PTA meetings, on front porches and phones, in letters and e-mail. No other subject takes so much of our time, and touches our souls so deeply.

The most important and challenging thing the President and I have ever done is raise a daughter.

There is no subject more important, no issue that should be more decisive, than how we see and treat our children. Children have no vote; they have no say in the political, business and economic decisions made by our nation.

And yet they are our future. That is why we can and must be their voice.

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