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November 10, 2007

IOWA: Remarks at the Iowa Jefferson-Jackson Dinner

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you Iowa Democrats. Thank you all. Thank you. What a night. What a great, great night. Thank you all. There's no better place to be than right here in Iowa with the great elected officials that you have: your governor, your lieutenant governor, your congressional delegation, our wonderful friend, Senator Tom Harkin and his wife Ruth. Isn't it a special treat to have the speaker of the house, madam speaker here tonight?

[Applause]

You know, on January 20th, 2009, someone will stand on the steps of the Capitol and raise his or her hand - [Applause] - to take the oath of office as the 44th President of the United States of America. And we are here tonight to make sure that that next president is a Democrat. [Applause] Because, we know, after seven years of George W. Bush, seven years of incompetence, cronyism, and corruption, seven years of a government of the few by the few and for the few. We, as a nation cannot afford any other choice.

We have to have a Democratic president because we have big challenges to meet. We have a war to end. We have an economy to revive. We have a 47 million Americans to insure. We have an energy crisis to solve. We have a homeland to protect, we have alliances to rebuild and we have a world to lead. So, we are ready for change.

[Applause]

But, you know what? Change, change is just a word if you do not have the strength and experience to make it happen. [Applause] We must nominate a nominee who has been tested, and elect a president who is ready to lead on day one.

[Applause]

I know what it is going to take to win. I know it's going to take all of us and millions more and a candidate who will work and fight every single day for the next year and then will go into the White House determined to bring about that change that we care so much about. Fortunately, I have a little experience standing up and fighting for what I believe is right and what I think America needs and how we can get there together.

[Applause]

I have spent 35 years making a difference and fighting for what I believe matters to people. As a young lawyer, I went to work for the Children's Defense Fund, fighting for abused and neglected kids, fighting for kids in the foster care system, fighting for kids with disabilities, kids without health care, kids without educational opportunities. In Arkansas, I helped to expand health care into rural areas and to reform the school system so that every child would have a chance to succeed.

As president, I will continue those fights. Continue so that we leave no person and no child out of America's promise. As first lady, I fought my heart out for health care, and, well - [Applause] - we might not have been successful that time, but I am so

proud that I played a part helping to create the Children's Health Insurance Program and to insure 6 million children. When I'm president, we are going to finish the job and provide quality affordable health care for every single American man, woman, and child.

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[Applause]

And, as Senator, I have continued to fight for family farmers and for workers. To fight for soldiers to get the body armor they needed, and for first responders to get the health care they required after 9/11. I have fought against the privatizing of Social Security and against the failed policies of George W. Bush at home and around the world. [Applause] And, when I am President, I will work to reverse the damage of the eight years of George Bush and I will restore the pride and progress in America that should be our birthright. That is who America is. We want to be proud again. We want to be progressive again and we will, when I am president.

[Applause]

Now, there are some who will say that they do not know where I stand. Well, I think you know better than that. I stand where I have stood for 35 years. I stand with you and with your children, and with every American who needs a fighter in their corner for a better life. Now, I know how easy it is in a campaign to get distracted; to focus on who is up and who is down, and who says what about whom. But, that is not what this election is about.

This election is about those Iowans and those Americans who feel invisible in their own country; who feel invisible to their own president. This election is about the woman I met in LeClair. She and her husband both work really hard, but they had to sell half the family farm to pay their medical expenses. This election is about a veteran I met in Sioux center, who bravely fought in Iraq and came home and had to keep fighting to get the health care that he needed. This election is about the mother from Greenville, whose daughter got sick and they did not have insurance, and she died. And on her death certificate, they could not even put a cause of death, because nobody had ever made a diagnosis. She was just 18-years old. There should not be any invisible Americans and when I am president, there will not be. We will have a president again, who gets up every day, worries about, thinks about, and fights for every single one of us. That's what America deserves, and that is what my candidacy offers.

[Applause]

Now, we are getting closer to the Iowa caucuses. They are going to be earlier than ever before. I know as the campaign goes on, that it's going to get a little hotter out there. But that is fine with me. Because, you know, as Harry Truman said, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. I'll tell you what, I feel really comfortable in the kitchen.

[Applause]

So, we have to ask ourselves, what is this election going to be focused on? Well, I will tell you what I want to do. I am not interested in attacking my opponents. I am interested in attacking the problems of America, and I believe -- [Applause] -- we should be turning up the heat on the Republicans; they deserve all the heat we can give them.

[Applause]

You know, you listen to the Republicans who are running this year, they see eight more years of George Bush. They see a nine trillion dollar debt and say let's spend trillions more. They see that we had one rush to war and then say, wait, wait, why have one more? Well, I think we are going to tell them, in the course of this campaign, that they do not have any more time. America is done with the Republicans and their failed policies and their refusal to give America back the future that we deserve. But we Democrats, we have to decide what we are for. We Democrats believe that the middle class is the backbone of our country and the guarantor of the American dream. so, when the Republicans stand by and watch

rising gas prices and rising health care costs and increase in college tuition and falling housing prices, and struggling families, and they have turned china into our banker, what are we going to do?

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Turn up the heat!

And we Democrats, we believe that every child has a god-given potential that we want to help unlock. So, when the Republicans cut Head Start, and refuse to fix No Child Left Behind? What do we do?

Turn up the heat!

And when we Democrats fight for universal health care and the Republicans veto health care for child and the let the insurance companies and the drug companies undermine health care for the rest of us, what do we do?

Turn up the heat!

And we Democrats, we believe in labor rights and women's rights and gay rights, and civil rights.

[Applause]

And we believe in a department of labor that is actually pro labor, and a Department of Justice that delivers justice. So, when the Republicans tried to turn the clock back on women's rights, when they tried to stomp out labor unions, when they try to undermine civil rights, what do we do?

Turn up the heat!

And we Democrats, we believe in protecting the environment and we believe in solving the energy crisis. So, when the Republicans turn over our energy policy to the oil companies and deny global warming, what do we do?

Turn up the heat!

And we Democrats, we believe in a government that works for all Americans again. We actually believe in appointing qualified people to do the jobs in the United States Government. So, when the Republicans stock the government with their cronies, when they give no-bid contracts to Halliburton and legal immunity to Blackwater, what do we do?

Turn up the heat!

And we Democrats, we believe in the power of science and innovation. We know it can lift up lives and grow the economy, so when President Bush declares a war on science, when he bans stem cell research, when he tries to turn Washington into an evidence free zone and put ideology in front of facts. What do we do?

Turn up the heat!

And finally, we believe that our country is both great and good. And as president, I will end the war in Iraq, end the era of cowboy diplomacy and restore America's standing and leadership in the world.

[Applause]

So, when the Republicans engage in fear-mongering and saber-rattling and talk about World War III, what do we do to them?

Turn up the heat!

Well, that is what it's going to take. We are going to turn up the heat on the Republicans and we are going to turn America around. But, we cannot do it if we are not united and together; not only Democrats, but independents, and even Republicans who reject this radical experiment in extremism. I know we can win this election and I know we don't have a choice. I am proud to have the support of so many Democrats and Democratic leaders from across America. And I am especially proud to have the support of so many Democratic leaders from the so-called red states to know that I can win. Leaders like the governor Beebe of Arkansas and

Senator Bayh of Indiana and Governor Ted Strickland of Ohio, who is here with me tonight. [Applause] Because, Democrats know, when we win Ohio, we win the White House.

[Applause]

I am so grateful to all of the Iowans who are supporting me and I absolutely appreciate everything you have done for me and for all of the candidates throughout the campaign. I ask all of you to join my campaign. I ask you to go and stand for me in the caucus on January 3. If you will stand for me for a night, I will stand and fight for you every day in this campaign and every day in the White House. Because together, we are going to restore America's leadership, rebuild a strong and prosperous middle-class, reform the government and reclaim the future for our children. Let's do it, Iowa Democrats. Let's make sure that we turn up the heat and turn America around. Thank you and God bless you.

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