

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

August 10, 2007

Dear Edna,

On a recent campaign stop in New Hampshire, I spoke with two women after a speech. One said, "You go, Hillary. We need you to turn this country around."

But then, with a terrible sadness in her voice, her friend said, "I love you, Hillary. But, after all Bush has done to our country, no new President can just turn it around. I only hope the country gets headed back in the right direction before my years on earth are over."

I told her what I am writing to tell you. I know she is right about how far off track George Bush, Dick Cheney and all the rest have driven our country. But, I believe the American people are resilient and I know how much we can achieve if we all pull together.

That is not just the challenge of this campaign. That is the challenge of this moment in American history.

That is what the 2008 elections are all about. And that is why I hope you will take just a few minutes to reflect with me on the task we have ahead of us.

I am not talking about poll numbers, the early primary calendar, or other mechanics and tactics of our campaign. All of those things matter only because they can lead us to the opportunity we are in search of — the chance to lead America boldly and swiftly into a new, more hopeful future.

Let us remind ourselves of a fundamental fact about this election.

At a time when our country urgently needs to make a clean break from the disastrous failures of the Bush administration, none of the Republican candidates are offering a new direction America needs.

The next time the Republican candidates debate, tune in. You will see a group of men who, despite their efforts to differentiate themselves from the other, all share a similarity. Not one of the frontrunners is willing to challenge George Bush and end the war.

Not one of them is ready to acknowledge the deep damage this administration has done to civil liberties, human rights and the rule of law. Not one of them has the courage to break from the grip of powerful special interests and solve the health care crisis that George Bush has ignored and let deepen.

Not one of them can possibly create the deep and lasting changes that the American people are demanding.

(over, please)

That is why this election matters so much. That is why there is such intense early interest in the 2008 presidential contest. It is because each of us knows that if we let a Bush Republican win the White House this time, the sad prediction of that woman I met in New Hampshire may in fact come true.

Four more years like the eight years of the Bush administration and it really may take the rest of our lifetimes to climb out of the hole they have dug for our country.

Do not worry though. We are not going to let it happen. Not a chance.

We are going to present the American people with a powerful vision of a new, more promising future. And we are going to engage folks all across the country in our campaign to bring about that future.

The first step must be bringing an end to the war in Iraq. You have heard me pledge, time and time again, that, if the Bush war in Iraq persists, then as President, I will end it.

But, with over 500 days left in the Bush presidency, we cannot just wait for him to be gone. This war will not end during the current administration unless we break down the nearly total wall of support for Bush's war among Republicans in Congress.

That is why, come September, Congress needs to challenge Republicans to stop supporting blank-check, no-deadline funding for the war. And, if they refuse, we should force their hand by repealing the resolution authorizing the war.

We need action this fall on another critical front as well. It is time for Congress to protect the Constitution by immediately voting to restore habeas corpus, denounce torture, and close Guantánamo Bay. It may well be that none of these measures will survive presidential vetoes.

Be that as it may, it is still time for Congress to go on record that we have had it with the Bush administration trampling on the Constitution and that we demand an immediate return to the rule of law.

Whatever President Bush does in his final 500 days in office, let me be perfectly clear. As President, I will act immediately to restore habeas corpus. I will make it clear that the United States disavows the use of torture. And I will order the closing of the detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay that have become an international symbol of this administration's reckless disregard for the rule of law.

The day that we act on these crucial human rights and civil liberties issues will be a great day for America. A return to respect for the Constitution and a dedication to the principles at the heart of our democracy are among the most crucial things we are going to win when we win this election.

But, a strong campaign in 2007 and strong victories in 2008 can achieve even more if we have the heart and drive to challenge powerful interests that have blocked progress on critical issues like health care and global warming.

America will be counting on our next President not only to break the grip that Bush Republicans have on the White House, but also to break the grip that deeply-entrenched special interests have on America's future.

We will forge real solutions that meet the needs of America's families and move America forward.

When we win next November, it will be a glorious day for the 44.8 million people in our country — including 8.3 million children living without health care coverage. They have had to suffer and worry for far too long as the Bush administration and the powerful interests it represents have let our health care crisis fester and worsen. And we need to make it clear to those families that change is on the way.

Our victory in 2008 will also signal an urgently-needed turning point on global warming and energy independence. This is another critical area where the intransigence of the Bush administration and the power of huge companies with a vested interest in the status quo have robbed our country of valuable time in addressing vitally important environmental and national security challenges stemming from our over-dependence on oil.

In this election, we need to make sure the American people also understand that the Bush Republicans will never do what it is going to take to reclaim our future from the grasp of powerful interests that have blocked our progress for far too long.

With any of them at the helm of our government, we will never move America forward.

But, with you by my side, I will break the grip of these powerful interests and launch a new era of progress on health care, energy and other vitally important issues.

So, it really comes down to this. How hard are we willing to work to lead America towards a new, more promising future?

When it is all said and done, the Bush Republicans running for President are totally incapable of breaking with the failed policies and dangerous ideas advanced by George W. Bush and Dick Cheney. They cannot give our country the fresh start we so urgently need.

You and I, on the other hand, can help fulfill the promise of democracy. We can speak to the deep yearning all across America for a government that lives up to our highest ideals, rather than making a mockery of them.

(over, please)

Together, we can lead America to a clean, independent energy future that will create millions of jobs. We can finally provide affordable health care for all Americans. We will forge an economy with less inequality and more opportunity. We will build a world with more partners and fewer enemies. And we will end the war in Iraq.

Perhaps most important of all, we will restore a sense of hope in people's hearts and a sense of possibility for our nation's future.

That is the greatest gift we can give to our fellow citizens. And it is the message of hope and opportunity we need to get across to that woman I told you about up in New Hampshire and others like her all across America who are losing hope that we can turn things around.

The only way we can move America forward into the future is to fill it with the hope, promise and opportunity that have been almost pushed out of view by the bitter, narrow-minded policies and politics of the Bush years.

In a few months' time, when the voting starts at a fast and furious pace, people will not only be picking a candidate; they will also be choosing a path forward for America.

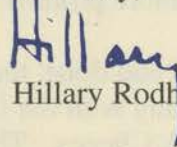
It is a choice that will resonate throughout our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren for decades to come. The stakes truly could not be any higher.

That is why I hope you will choose this moment as a personal opportunity for you to act.

You and I both know how much we can achieve if we work together and how essential it is to shape America's future by shaping the outcome of this election.

I need your ongoing financial support to help carry our campaign forward. With the very future of our country at stake, I urge you to stand with me.

Sincerely,



Hillary Rodham Clinton

P.S. I need your help now more than ever. We are ahead in the polls and have expanded our field operations to many of the early voting states, but we are being out-raised financially. Your donation is critical to ensure our success in reaching out to voters we need on our side to win. The weeks ahead are crucial. Let us stand up for what we believe in — and let us win.

Paid for by Hillary Clinton for President Exploratory Committee.