



# TAVIS SMILEY PRESENTS

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 23, 2008

Contact:

Vanesse Lloyd Sgambati, (215) 877-2012, [vlloydsгам@aol.com](mailto:vlloydsгам@aol.com)

Jenny Park, (415) 867-1166, [jpark@fenton.com](mailto:jpark@fenton.com)

### HILLARY CLINTON CALLS FOR PARTY UNITY AT 2008 STATE OF THE BLACK UNION

NEW ORLEANS — In a speech that concluded a day-long series of panel discussions at the 2008 State of the Black Union, Senator Hillary Clinton acknowledged the unusual "intensity" of the battle for the Democratic presidential nomination, but insisted that "we also believe in all our hearts" that the party will be united in the fall against the Republican candidate.

The senator expressed deep appreciation for everyone who responded on Friday to the forum's call to help rebuild New Orleans. Clinton made it clear that rebuilding the hurricane-damaged city is "not a New Orleans or a Louisiana obligation, but an American obligation."

Clinton, who is seeking to become the country's first woman president, acknowledged the unusually competitive nature of this year's primary race, which pits her against Barack Obama, who would be the first African American to occupy the White House. "Uncharted territory means the way forward isn't always easy," she said. "The high stakes and historic nature of Barack's and my candidacy have imbued this campaign with an intensity seldom seen in this political arena."

When asked about her concerns about the extended contest, she said she isn't as worried as others. "We forget that my husband didn't win the nomination until June. The race has raised the level of interest in this presidential campaign that I think will bode very well for both the primary and the general election."

Clinton echoed a party unity theme strongly voiced among panelists and attendees at the symposium, who included civil rights activist Al Sharpton, Democratic political strategist Donna Brazile, Princeton professor Cornel West and comedian/activist Dick Gregory. "Those of us who have fought side by side over the years cannot allow our differences in our political choices to undermine our fundamental unity that we need to change the course of the country in November," Clinton said.

The symposium provided an opportunity for the Democratic candidate to lay out her economic agenda. "Dr. King's unfinished agenda was an economic agenda," she said, and pledged to create 5 million green collar jobs in inner cities, rebuild crumbling infrastructure and stem the rising tide of home foreclosures.

She also took time to highlight her strong working relationships with many of those who attended the predominantly African American conference, including Democratic legislators Sheila Jackson Lee and Stephanie Tubbs Jones, who have worked with Clinton on voting reform and commemorating accomplishments of black women.

During a question-and-answer session with moderator Tavis Smiley, Clinton was asked about the racially controversial remarks made by her husband, former President Bill Clinton, during the South Carolina primary. "Many of you here know his heart. If anyone was offended by anything that was said, whether it was misinterpreted or not, I regret that."

The audience, which included many Obama supporters, responded warmly to Clinton's call for Democratic unity. "I do believe that the constituencies who have historically supported the Democratic Party — women, Latinos, blacks, working people — must be united once we have a nominee. Senator McCain and the Republicans will run a very vigorous and tough campaign. We need every single one of us to be committed to winning in November. I think we will. Let's make sure that happens."

###

#### **About Tavis Smiley Presents**

Tavis Smiley Presents is an event production company dedicated to bringing thought provoking discussions, engaging town hall meetings, and consumer expos to communities across the country. During the last nine years its programs have reached more than 350,000 conference attendees and attracted millions of television viewers nationwide. Tavis Smiley is the host of *Tavis Smiley* on PBS, a weeknight half-hour talk show and the host of *The Tavis Smiley Show* from PRI, a two-hour news and opinion program featuring provocative commentary and exclusive interviews. He's the author of 12 books including his bestselling memoir, *What I Know for Sure: My Story of Growing Up in America*. He founded the Tavis Smiley Foundation to provide leadership training skills to youth ages 13 to 18.