that many Americans held captive were subjected to unspeakable horrors, but throughout maintained their honor, strong faith in our Nation, and indomitable spirit.

There are approximately 50,000 courageous former POWs living among us, including those held captive during World War II. Many still cope with the physical and emotional effects of their captivity. We owe a profound debt of gratitude to these quiet heroes who served our Nation so well and sacrificed so much. And to the families of those still missing in action, we pledge our unwavering commitment to achieve the fullest possible accounting for their loved ones and to seek the recovery, repatriation, and identification of the remains of those who have died.

On September 15, 2000, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Southeast Asia, a black and white banner symbolizing America's missing service members and our unshakable resolve to ascertain their fate, will be flown over the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System Headquarters, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, national cemeteries, and other locations across our country—a powerful reminder to the world that we will keep faith with those who so faithfully served America.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 15, 2000, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I call upon all Americans to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war who suffered the hardships of enemy captivity and those missing in action whose fate is still undetermined. I call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 18, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 19.

Remarks at an IMPAC 2000 Reception

September 14, 2000

Thank you very much. Well first of all, I want to thank all of you for supporting this endeavor, and I want to thank, as David did—Ken, thank you. I have—you have come a long way since we had that dinner. I think it was what we ate that night that did it. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Martin for all the work that he's done, and as your predecessor and also as Patrick Kennedy's predecessor. He was 7 feet tall when he started this job. And thank you, Vic Fazio, my longtime friend. I want to say a special word of appreciation to David Bonior. I did not know him very well when I got elected President, and one of the things that I will always treasure about these last 8 years is the relationship that he and I developed. I like him, and I admire his wife so much, and I feel about him a little bit the way I do about Nancy Pelosi. I love them when they are with me, and I love them when they are not—[*laughter*]—because, you know, both of them are so convicted, and they believe things, and they care about things, and they stick their necks out. And it's especially hard for him because he's in a district where he has to pay a price for every vote of conscience he casts, and he does it anyway. I want to thank you.

Probably more than anyone in America, I know how important this endeavor is. That's why I showed up tonight, besides the fact that I told Ken I would. [*Laughter*] When we had a majority in the Congress, we passed the economic plan that started this whole roll we've been on: the crime bill that played a major role in getting us the lowest violent crime rate in 27 years; the Brady bill, which has kept guns out of the hands of half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers; the AmeriCorps bill, which has now given way over 150,000 young people a chance to serve in their community and earn money to go

to college; the family medical leave act, which has helped about 25 million Americans to take some time off when a newborn baby was in the family or a parent was sick, without losing their job; and the beginning of one of the lesser known achievements that we've made together, which is a systematic attempt to reform Federal education policy, to concentrate on standards and results and effective investment in reform.

And I know what a difference it makes. This is an unusual and, in effect, a really kind of a wonderful time in my life. Earlier this year, I got to cast what well may be my last vote as a citizen of my native State for Al Gore for President, in the Democratic primary, and Tuesday I got to vote for my wife for the first time, which was an immense thrill.

And last night, when I watched the debate, I realize now what she went through all those years watching me. Is he going to fall over? Is he going to smile? Should he slug back? Should he just keep smiling? [*Laughter*] It's amazing, it's really been—so, now, my family has a new candidate, my party has a new leader, and I have become the Cheerleader in Chief, and I like it.

But I just want to say, all of you know how important this is, or you wouldn't be here. But what Ken said is really worth remembering. I think we're going to do well in these elections if we can continue to clarify the choices, because the American people want this prosperity to continue, but they don't want us to be in idle. They want us to take on the big challenges out there.

I think we have an excellent chance, and I've worked as hard as I could for the Senate candidates, for the House candidates, for the two committees, as well as to help our party and our nominees. But what I can tell you is that in spite of all the good things that have happened, the challenges that are out there are really big, and they cannot—and no American should expect President Gore, Vice President Lieberman, and a Democratic House and Senate to deal with them all in a year.

You know, when all the baby boomers retire, which will start in about 8 years, for the ones that take early Social Security, and go on for 18 to 20 more years, there will only be two people working for every one person on Social Security, although the Congress, thank you very much, took the earnings limit off Social Security. And now more people will be able to work in their later years, and that's good.

We have to—and with all these advances in health care, we're going to have huge challenges to figure out. How do we redefine aging in America? Yes, how do we save Social Security? How do we save Medicare? How do we add a prescription drug benefit? It's unconscionable that it doesn't exist already; we would have it now, if we had a Democratic Congress.

But how are we going to deal with a country, that is, in terms of age distribution, radically different from anything we've ever known and will be for 20 years, maybe 30 years, and then it will all start to get back to a normal distribution? We've got the most diverse student population we've ever had. It's a wonder, and we have actually learned how to turn around failing schools.

We know how to do it now, and it took probably 15 years of serious effort. But I was in a school in New York the other day, a grade school where, 2 years ago—listen to this—2 years ago 80 percent of the kids were doing reading and math below grade level in Harlem. Two years later 76 percent of the kids are doing reading and math at or above grade level—in just 2 years.

We know how to do this. But America has never succeeded, ever, in guaranteeing quality education for all of our kids, and now we've got the most diverse group of kids we've ever had. Just across the river in Alexandria, there are children from 180 different national and ethnic groups, whose parents speak over 100 different languages as their first language. This is great for us in this global economy, if, but only if, we can figure out how to give all these kids a world class education.

We've had more millionaires and more billionaires in the last 8 years than in any time in history, and I like that, and I hope the next administration can keep it going. Maybe I can become one of them. But we still have too many people working hard for too little and having a really hard time making ends meet.

What kind of tax policy should we have for them? What kind of laws should we have to make sure that as more and more parents are working, they can work and still have time for their kids and save enough to make sure their kids can go to college? These are big questions, and this just scratches the iceberg. I didn't get into all the global questions.

The point I'm trying to make is, it would be tragic if we have a very good election this time, and just because of the distribution of the Governorships, which we can't get a majority of back until 2002, just because there aren't many up this year, and because we didn't do a good job in the legislative races, and because we weren't legally prepared, we lost what we won, notwithstanding the fact that a plain majority of the American people agree with the direction in which we want to take the country.

Now, if they disagree with us and they want to vote us out, that's their perfect right, but we shouldn't lose the Congress if a majority of the people are still with us. That's the important thing. We Democrats would never say we should stay in office whether they're for us or not, because we want to jiggle the lines around, but we should have an honest, open, legal, constitutional redistricting process so that if we can win this time and if we can maintain the confidence of the country, we can stay in the saddle because that's what the people want.

So this is profoundly important, and I spend a lot of time—I try to spend a significant amount of time every single week I was President, thinking about what America would be like, not just a month or a year from now but 5 and 10 and 20 years from now. And that's very, very important.

So I just want you to know, these Members here, I believe in them. Nothing good I achieved, including when they were in the minority, would have been possible if it hadn't been for them. In spite of all the good things that have happened in this country, I really believe that the next 8 years can be even more exciting, even more interesting, even more productive if we just stick with the philosophy that says we want to make sure everybody has a chance, that everybody matters, and we all do better when we work together. That's basically what we Democrats believe.

And you've made it possible, if the American people stick with us, to make sure that they can continue to do their job. That is very, very important.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. in the Lafayette Room at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Ken Bentsen, chair, IMPAC 2000 National Democratic Redistricting Project; former Representative Vic Fazio; and Representative Martin Fost, chair, Democratic caucus.

Remarks at a Dinner for Hillary Clinton

September 14, 2000

Thank you very much. Vernon has got this microphone here. It's not on. It's feeding to the press. And if I know Vernon, he's already fed the press, which may mean that I will get a little bit of slack from them if I say anything I shouldn't.

Let me begin by saying this is my second home. Usually, when I'm a surrogate for Hillary—and I try to do this as much as I can, because that way she can be out getting votes. I'm glad to do it, but tonight I really got the better end of the deal. Vernon and Ann have been so wonderful to us, and we have had these seven—soon to be eight Christmas Eves together, with Dwight and Toni and the rest of their family.

And he's always letting me bring all my family here. And sometimes, that's a pretty large and rowdy bunch. I have two young, impish nephews who, from time to time—[*inaudible*]—grandchildren. And I'm very grateful for their friendship, and I want to thank Dwight and Toni and Ann and Vernon one more time for being there for our family tonight.

We've had an interesting talk around the table tonight about everything in the wide world. But I'd just like to say a couple of things. This is a rather interesting time in my life. I'm not running for anything for the first time in 26 years. [*Laughter*] My party has a new leader. My family has a new candidate. I cast what may well be the last vote