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ernors Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., of South Carolina, Ned Ray McWherter of Tennessee, and Arne Carlson of Minnesota.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of Deval L. Patrick To Be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and an Exchange With Reporters

February 1, 1994

The President. Good afternoon. For tens of millions of Americans the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice has historically embodied what is best about our country. It's helped us to keep the promise of our Constitution, to provide to every American equal opportunity and equal protection under the law, regardless of race or gender or disability. Because of our pursuit of equal treatment under the law, we've made a lot of progress in this country in the workplace, in the schools, in the voting booths, and in the courts. But there is still much more to be done. We need a strong and aggressive Civil Rights Division and a strong and compassionate advocate for freedom and fairness at the helm of that Division.

Today I am proud to nominate Deval Patrick to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. I believe he is uniquely qualified to lead this Division in this decade. He's been chosen because he has distinguished himself as a lawyer whose wise counsel, keen negotiating skills, and mastery at litigation are held in the highest esteem.

He's fought successfully against discrimination and for civil rights for his entire life, both professionally and personally. He understands that the law is a tool to help real people with real problems. He's here with his family today, having come a long way from his childhood on the south side of Chicago through a distinguished academic and professional career of which any American could be proud.

The quest for civil rights gives life to our highest ideals and our deepest hopes. For his entire career Deval Patrick has played a role in that struggle, and he has made a real difference. Therefore, I know he will perform in a very outstanding manner in his new role as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

Mr. Patrick?

Attorney General? [*Laughter*] I don't know what order he's in.

Mr. Patrick. Stick with me.

The President. That's the idea.

[*At this point, Attorney General Janet Reno and Mr. Patrick made brief remarks.*]

Assistant Attorney General Nominee

Q. Mr. President, conservative groups are already attacking Mr. Patrick, the same groups that attacked Lani Guinier, saying that he is the "Stealth Guinier." How are you going to sell this nomination and make sure that your view of his record gets out accurately?

The President. Well, I think that this nomination may be about those groups and whether they're proceeding in good faith. That is, you know, before those groups said, "Well, we don't object to Lani Guinier's career as a lawyer. We just don't agree with her writings about future remedies." So now when they say "Stealth Guinier," what they mean is that both these people have distinguished legal careers in trying to enforce the civil rights laws of the country. I hope that Mr. Patrick would plead guilty to that.

And the truth is, a lot of those people are going to be exposed because they never believed in the civil rights laws, they never believed in equal opportunity, they never lifted a finger to give anybody of a minority race a chance in this country. And this time, if they try that, it's going to be about them, because they won't be able to say it's about somebody's writings, about future remedies. If they attack his record it means just exactly what we've all suspected all along, they don't give a riff about civil rights.

Well, those of us who care about civil rights were elected by the American people to take care of them. That's what we intended to do.

Death Penalty

Q. Mr. President, do you agree with his argument that the death penalty is racially discriminatory against blacks?

The President. Do I agree? He's made that argument in court. I don't agree with that, no.

Q. A 1987 Supreme Court case.

The President. No.

Q. Have you talked with him about——

The President. But I think the most compelling evidence that was introduced to support it, as I've said many times as a supporter of capital punishment, is that the race of the victim seems to determine the outcome of the verdict. There's a lot of evidence—the Supreme Court actually did not reject that evidence. They just said that that was not sufficient to outlaw the penalty as a constitutional matter. And I have repeatedly said I think that every State prosecutor ought to examine that. If there is evidence—every State ought to look and see, is there evidence that there's a disparity in the application of this penalty based on the race of the victim. If there is, States ought to take steps to try to do something about it.

Health Care Reform

Q. Mr. President, Senator Dole says that your staff shouldn't go around calling people liars just because they disagree with them on health care. Is this exchange beginning to escalate out of hand?

The President. No. I don't know what he's talking about. I'm sorry, I can't—I don't——

Q. Well, he's talking about the reply that your office put out to an article about the Clinton health plan in the New Republic last week, which goes in several places to say that they are blatant lies. He was addressing it specifically to Mr. Magaziner.

The President. Well, I hate to use that word, but the New Republic article was way off base. And the New Republic didn't make total disclosure about the source of the article.

But I think Senator Dole was quite conciliatory at the Governors' Association today, and I have certainly tried to be constructive. And I know it may make better news for you all to drive a wedge between us, but it's better for the American people if we work together and tone our rhetoric down.

Northern Ireland

Q. On a foreign policy matter, sir, Gerry Adams says the time has come for the United States to weigh in on the Ireland question. You had spoken in the campaign of becoming more involved or having the United States more involved in trying to find a peaceful solution there. Will you take a more aggressive stance toward trying to promote a peace settlement in Northern Ireland?

The President. Well, when I spoke about that in the campaign, we didn't have the evidence that we now have that the British and the Irish Government would take the steps that they have taken. Let's be fair. The people that have to resolve this are the Irish and the British, and since that campaign, I think it's astonishing what's been done. The joint declaration is something the United States very much supports.

I did believe that by giving Mr. Adams this visa, this limited visa to come here, that we might have a constructive role in pushing the peace process, which is why I did it. And I think that was an appropriate thing to do. But I think we should also support the work being done by the Prime Ministers of both Ireland and Britain in pursuing the peace.

Health Care Reform

Q. Senator Rockefeller today said that he thought you were being a little bit too conciliatory to your good friends the Governors on health care, and he thought that maybe Mrs. Clinton could bring you back. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, Senator Rockefeller made a big mistake today. He's a wonderful man, but he made a big mistake. He read a press report and assumed it was true, I mean—[*laughter*]—or fully accurate. That is, he read a report of someone else's characterization of what I said and assumed it was fully accurate. And the people who were characterizing it obviously were characterizing the conversation in the light most favorable to their position.

I don't mean that the press misreported it. I mean the press reported it accurately. But that's what they do. When you have private conversations with people, they often characterize it in the light most favorable to their position. I think that's what happened.

I didn't say anything differently in that meeting than I have said repeatedly, which is that we are and we should be flexible on the size of the alliances—that's already been said by Secretary Bentsen—and that in order to have a health care plan which passes muster in the Congress, we have to have some way of showing how much taxpayer money is at risk over a 5-year period. That's required of every bill passed by Congress.

That's all I said, and I think the interpretation of it—while I don't dispute whatever they said, I think that the folks who communicated that to the press were doing it in the light most favorable to their own position. I understand that; that's fair game. But I would caution Senator Rockefeller to not think that I'd left his position. In many ways he's the heart and soul of this fight for health care. And if we change positions, he and I, we're going to try to do it together.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:38 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Message to the Congress on Small Business
February 1, 1994

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to present my first annual report on the state of small business. This report covers data for fiscal year 1992, a period of slow economic recovery that occurred just before my Administration took office.

Small businesses create many new jobs and are an important part of our Nation's economic growth. That is why, in my first address to the Joint Session of the Congress, I proposed some of the boldest targeted incentives for small business in history. These measures will benefit not only small businesses, but the American work force, our Nation's economy, and our international competitiveness.

At the same time, we must undertake some major corrective efforts. As small business owners will testify, the best thing the government could do for small business and the economy is to reduce the deficit. The primary goal of the economic program is to set the economy on the proper course for the short- and long-term future. Deficit reduction and shifting consumption to investment are the ways to accomplish that goal.

Reducing health care costs while ensuring that all Americans have access to health care is another national imperative. I have said it before: bringing health spending in line with inflation would do more for the private sector than almost any incentive or tax cut we could promote. At the same time, we must find a way to provide health care for everyone. Currently two-thirds of the Americans without health insurance are employed—many in small businesses. My health care task force has evaluated many proposals to ensure that health care is available to small business employees and affordable for small business owners. It will take time to change our health care system, but we are taking the important first steps.

We will also need to keep looking for better ways to provide for workers upon retirement. As this report documents, pension plans, like health plans, are much less available and affordable in small businesses. And as the baby boom generation moves toward retirement, issues related to Social Security and pension plan availability take on new urgency.

Beyond these long-range efforts, I have asked the Congress to join me in investing in small business and economic growth through specific tax incentives, capital formation initiatives, enterprise and empowerment zones, technology investments, and education and job training efforts.

To encourage long-term investment in small business, I supported—and the Congress passed—a 50 percent tax exclusion on capital gains from investments in qualified small business stock held for at least 5 years. This incentive, which will help small businesses raise critically needed capital, is projected to create 80,000 new jobs over the next 5 years. I also favored such an exclusion for investment in small business venture capital firms targeting investments to minority-owned businesses. Another small business incentive I supported increases the "Section 179" expensing limitation from $10,000 to $17,500, which will enable a number of smaller firms to purchase equipment needed for modernization and growth.

My Administration supports easing the regulatory burden on small firms so that more of the time spent filling out paperwork—especially complicated or duplicative paperwork—can be