

and half of what's on there may be irrelevant. But this is a big deal. This is a huge deal. This is the last major election of the 20th century and the first election of the 21st century. Things have changed. We have to change. And America is going to go into that next century with either the unifying vision dominant or the divisive vision dominant.

That's what I want you to think about, not Democrats or Republicans or any of that. I want you to think about your country. And if you look at the life and career and work of this

man, it would be hard to think of someone who could be a better poster boy for a unifying vision of America's future in the 21st century than Tom Bruggere.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. In his remarks, he referred to Oregon senatorial candidate Tom Bruggere, his wife, Kelley, and their children Maria and T.C.; Mayor Vera Katz of Portland; and actor Christopher Reeve.

Statement on Same-Gender Marriage September 20, 1996

Throughout my life I have strenuously opposed discrimination of any kind, including discrimination against gay and lesbian Americans. I am signing into law H.R. 3396, a bill relating to same-gender marriage, but it is important to note what this legislation does and does not do.

I have long opposed governmental recognition of same-gender marriages, and this legislation is consistent with that position. The act confirms the right of each State to determine its own policy with respect to same-gender marriage and clarifies for purposes of Federal law the operative meaning of the terms "marriage" and "spouse."

This legislation does not reach beyond those two provisions. It has no effect on any current Federal, State, or local antidiscrimination law and does not constrain the right of Congress or any State or locality to enact antidiscrimination laws. I therefore would take this oppor-

tunity to urge Congress to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, an act which would extend employment discrimination protections to gays and lesbians in the workplace. This year the Senate considered this legislation contemporaneously with the act I sign today and failed to pass it by a single vote. I hope that in its next session Congress will pass it expeditiously.

I also want to make clear to all that the enactment of this legislation should not, despite the fierce and at times divisive rhetoric surrounding it, be understood to provide an excuse for discrimination, violence, or intimidation against any person on the basis of sexual orientation. Discrimination, violence, and intimidation for that reason, as well as others, violate the principle of equal protection under the law and have no place in American society.

NOTE: H.R. 3396, approved September 21, was assigned Public Law No. 104-199.

Remarks in Brandon, South Dakota September 20, 1996

Give them a hand. [*Applause*] I thought they did well. Did you read somewhere that that was my favorite Beatles song? [*Laughter*] Or did you just do it on your—it was a wonderful job. Thank you very much, and thank you for playing here tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to be back in South Dakota. I came here three times when I was seeking the Presidency. I loved every trip. I couldn't wait to get back. And I want you to know how we came to be here tonight. We were planning our schedule a couple of weeks