

money we worked so hard for after only 6 years of effort, turned around an unbelievable record of fiscal irresponsibility, or are we going to pay off our debts in the bank and pay off our debts to our families, not only to our parents and grandparents but to future generations? That is the question.

So I want to ask you to join me. You know, Hanna said she didn't know much about politics. I thought she made a pretty good political speech, myself. [Laughter] But she said something that's really important. She said, "You know, I don't understand why this should be a political issue."

You know, sometimes when things get real tense in Washington, you know, and some of my friends in the other party get real excited, I say, "Hey, loosen up, you know. We're all getting older; none of us are going to be here forever. People get a chance to vote every election. Loosen up. Relax, No one escapes time and age. Republicans age just like Democrats." [Laughter] People who are independents still get sick every now and then, even though they refuse to register in a political party. This is not a political issue anywhere in America, and it should not be a political issue in Washington, DC. This is something we can do together for the future of America.

I want you to reach out to your Representatives from Illinois. You are represented in this State by both Republicans and Democrats in the United States Congress, more or less fairly apportioned. I wish it were different, but there it is. [Laughter] You can write to them. You can call them. You can say, "Do this not only for us, but do it for our children and our future. Do it because we're all aging and it's a high-class problem, that we're living longer."

But we have to prepare for the day when the baby boomers retire. And we should not wait another day to provide the prescription drug benefit. And we have the money to do it. This is simply a matter of choice. I ask you, without regard to your party, to reach out to the members of your congressional delegation and say, "This is the right choice for our future."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall at the Chicago Cultural Center. In his remarks, he referred to Anna L. Willis, commissioner, Chicago Department on Aging; and pharmacist Linda Esposito, vice president, Illinois Pharmacists Association.

Exchange With Reporters at Wrigley Field in Chicago

June 30, 1999

First Lady

Q. Mr. President, Hillary is a Yankees fan. Are you still a Cubs fan? [Laughter]

The President. Yes, and so is she. You know what she said. Don't play press games here. [Laughter] This is about sports, not politics.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what did Tony Blair tell you when you had—

Q. Did Tony Blair give you an update?

The President. I got an update from Tony Blair on where things are, and we're now in touch with the various parties, and I expect to make some more phone calls sometime in the next hour or so. It's an all-nighter.

Q. Will the talks be extended tonight?

The President. Yes, I think by most standards they've already been extended. But I do expect so. I think they'll work quite late.

First Lady

Q. Do you think the First Lady will let you keep the jacket, since she's a big Cubs fan?

The President. Yes. [Laughter] But I will have to disclose it. I'll have to share wearing rights.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:50 p.m. in the Chicago Cubs' locker room. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.