

Sept. 9 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Quality Child Care and After-School Opportunities September 11, 2000

Today the Urban Institute released a report highlighting the struggle working parents face in trying to provide supervised care for their children before and after school. The report found that over 4 million children of working mothers ages 6 to 12 were regularly without any adult supervision when they were not in school. While the report highlights that child care patterns for schoolchildren differ greatly from community to community, one thing is clear: Far too many children have no care when they are not in school. Millions of children without care in the hours after school are in harm's way—we know that crime and victimization rates among school-age children are highest in the after-school hours. The report also highlights research showing that high-quality after-school programs can give school-age children access to academic and enrichment activities that lead to improved student achievement and better behavior.

It is clear from this report that we need to do a much better job of providing working parents with access to affordable quality child care or after-school opportunities for their schoolchildren. That is why I call on Congress to respond to the needs of working parents for more help. I ask Congress to accept my budget proposal to invest \$1 billion in the 21st Century Community Learning Center program to provide over 2 million children with after-school opportunities. I also ask that Congress invest in child care options that can be used to provide child care for children up to age 13, expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit to help over 8 million families pay for child care, and boost the Child Care and Development Block Grant by an additional \$817 million.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 8 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m. on September 11.

Remarks to the Community of Westchester County in Scarsdale, New York September 11, 2000

Thank you. Patty was really good, wasn't she? [*Laughter*] She did a great job. I want to thank her for being here, for the work she does as a parent and the work she does in her day job for our children.

And thank you Peggy Charren, a long-time friend of Hillary's and mine, and of all the children of America. Thank you, Andy Spano, for being here. And thank you, our great friend Nita Lowey. What a terrific Representative in Congress she is, and I hope you get a little help. Thank you.

I want to thank Eileen Lehrer and Ellen Lazarus and all the people here at the JCC

who made us feel so welcome today. I even got to walk downstairs and shake hands with some of the children and teachers and parents on what I understand is the first day of school—[*laughter*—which makes this quite appropriate.

This happens to me often—and I'm sure it will more and more now that Hillary is in politics as a candidate—but very often I get to speak last, and everything that really needs to be said has already been said. [*Laughter*] Everything that needs to be said has been said. But what does it all mean? And how can we distill it? So let me just try.

First of all, this is, in some ways, the newest of issues and, in some ways, the oldest of issues. Plato said, thousands of years ago, "Those who tell the story, rule society." Whenever a young person comes to me, interested in politics, wanting to run for office, dreaming of public service, and they ask me for advice, I always tell them two things: One is, you've got to have some reason to run bigger than yourself; and the second is, you have to learn to listen, to hear the music of other people's lives, because everybody's got a story.

Now, that's really what this is about. We live in a culture, and a lot of the stories our children have, the stories of their lives, come direct from the accumulated experiences and memories that they absorb from their parents, their grandparents, their extended family, the people of their faith, the people of their school, the people of their community.

And then there's all the stuff they get from a further reach. And more and more and more now, over the last 40 to 50 years, with the advent of television and then the computers and the video games and music video and, frankly, the 24-hour news cycle, and then the explosion of cable channels, you can get more and more and more of your story by indirection, from third party sources, at all hours of the day and night, from all kinds of sources, that parents have less and less direct control over.

Because what this is really about is, what will be the stories that shape these children, and how will they relate to it? And what specifically does this FTC report mean? It's already been mentioned that we've known now for 300 years, through some 300 studies, I might add—300—this is not something that's subject to debate—that regular, persistent exposure of children at young ages to indiscriminate violence tends to make them less sensitive to the real and human impact of violence in their own lives. It changes their story. That's what this is about. It shapes how they think about the implications and the impact of what they do and what other people do.

So we started working on this, I guess, Hillary and I did—well, she started working on it years ago—but from I think the first time I went to Hollywood to talk to people about this was December of 1993, I believe. And then we began to work about 5 years ago with the entertainment community on a ratings system for television programs and on the V-chip. And this

year will be the first year, I think, that all new televisions have to have the V-chip built in. Before, you had to get a little box to go with it.

And meanwhile, we've been working with the video game industry about kind of a ratings system and a little control over access to that. And we've done some more things I'll mention in a minute with movies. But the whole idea was, in the fight to save public broadcasting, to try to encourage more children's and educational programming on all networks, the fight to get the TV ratings system and the V-chip and deal with the video games and the movies—the whole idea was to try to give parents more control over the stories of their children's lives at their earliest and most vulnerable points, so that later on, the kids would be happier and more full and less anxiety-ridden, and the society would be more stable and less violent.

And it's a very old story. What Plato said a long time ago is still true today. So the problem is, this FTC report says that some entertainment companies are engaged in marketing practices that if not illegal are clearly wrong because they're trying to sell their movies and their other products to the very people that they, themselves, say shouldn't see them. "So here's my rating system. Here's what I hope the parents will act on, and while the parents aren't looking, I'm going to beam this advertising in and hope they'll come anyway."

This validates what Hillary has been saying for years. But the real issue is, what are we going to do?

I don't really think that there are a lot of people making these movies and video games that hope your kids turn out to be violent. Do you? I mean, I don't think that they want your kids to have a twisted story and our society to become ever more unstable. This is about the economics of the modern media: both the explosion of media outlets, the explosion of movies being made, the explosion of video games being made, the explosion of television programs being made, a gazillion channels on your television at night; the coming integration of all these media forces so that some day not too long from now you'll hang a thin little, very high-definition screen up on a wall, take it from wall to wall in your house, and you'll be able to have the Internet and your video games and your television, and sooner or later, we're going to beam direct in movies. You won't even have

to wait for the DVD. That's what's all happening. And there will be a gazillion options, and it will be 24 hours a day, and that's where it's going.

And what happens is—and these people face the same problems here, same challenges. All these folks are just giving us news. And what happens to them? You know, a very small percentage of these films make money directly in the theater. And interestingly enough, the R-rated movies, a smaller percentage of them than the G and the PG movies make money directly in the theater. So a lot of these movies are made for an after-market. But they've got to get as much money as they can. We're just talking about the movies now. And they turn around and sell the movies to television or sell the movies overseas or whatever. But that's no help to you. You've got children to raise. You don't care about their problems.

And we're working this out as a society. I'm very worried about it for a lot of reasons. It used to be all of the programming that only adults should see when we had three networks were on television at night, after a certain time. Now everything is on all the time, at least somewhere. I don't know when some people sleep at all anymore. [Laughter] The whole rhythm and pattern of normal life has been affected by this constant barrage of stuff.

Now, last spring I asked the movie industry to reevaluate the PG rating, to make sure that it was meaning something. And I asked them to keep guns out of the ads that kids might see. And I asked the theater and video owners to enforce more strictly the ratings system.

Now, I'm glad that the theater owners accepted this challenge, and the report shows that they're actually making progress. But according to the FTC investigators, underage children still frequently are sold tickets for R-rated movies.

So here's where we are on the specific issue at hand. We know that extreme, consistent, persistent exposure to violence of children at young ages desensitizes them to the impact of their own behavior and others. It disables them from having full feelings about violent conduct. We know this. This is not subject to debate.

We know now that we're making progress with a lot of good people in the entertainment industry. They're doing more to rate their shows and try to provide other kinds of shows. But we know that a lot of people are out there now—we know—today, advertising these very

programs to the people they say shouldn't see them and that some of the people who control children's access in theaters are still letting them in, in a very casual way.

So what do we do? Peggy said we don't want to get into first amendment censorship. I agree with that. I think we have to challenge and say, the American people, "I agree with what Hillary said." The American people will give, I think, the entertainment industry a period now to fix this, but something has to be done. You can't make a mockery of a system that you say has integrity. They say these ratings systems mean something. They can't turn around and advertise to people that shouldn't see this stuff. They can fix this. They can fix this. So I think it's very important.

Now, we will know whether they take appropriate action or not sometime in the next few months. Sometime in the next few months, I won't be President anymore. [Laughter] And I'll just be a citizen like the rest of you, and I look forward to that. But that's what makes these elections very important. Because one of the major factors—challenges, I think, facing this country over the next decade, with all of our prosperity, will be how to make it possible for more and more Americans to succeed at work and at their most important work, which is raising children. It's the most important job any mother or father does, raising children. It is society's most important work.

I don't know how many times I said that when I had an argument with my daughter over the last umpty-ump years—[laughter]—"At least I want you to know this. I consider you my most important job, even if you disagree with me. You've got to understand that." This is important, what are we going to do?

Now, that's where these elections are important. You heard Hillary talk about; you heard Peggy talk about it. Hillary has been working on this stuff for 30 years. You need somebody in the Congress who has a lifetime commitment and world-class expertise on these issues, somebody who doesn't go around just jumping at the latest headline.

I was kind of proud of her today. I didn't know exactly what she was going to say. She stood up here and said, "I'm not suggesting we ought to have censorship here, but we've got to have mutual responsibility in this society, and they have to do something about this. This

report says that people in the entertainment industry, not all of them but a lot of them, are doing things that are wrong, that they acknowledge are wrong. We've got to see what happens."

You need people like that in the Congress, and especially in the Senate because it's such a debating forum for America's hot issues. You need someone who understands that all these rating systems don't make a lot of sense to a lot of people, and it would be far better if there were one, uniform, unambiguous rating system for all forms of entertainment to which our children are exposed, something Hillary, I think, was the first and maybe the only person to forcefully advocate in the entire country.

And you need someone who sees in a larger sense that this media issue is tied to other issues: the need for gun safety legislation, the need for safe and drug-free schools, the need for after-school and summer school programs for kids, to give them positive things to do, so you won't have to spend all of your time just telling them what not to do. There needs to be things for children to do. It's very unproductive raising a child if you spend all your time saying no. It is a dead-bang loser strategy for any parent if all you have to say is, no. You've got to say something, yes. You've got to have something for the kids to say yes to, who understands that we need greater support for child care, for foster care, for adoptions, for family leave. The reason I think that she ought to be New York's Senator is that this media issue is another example of a lifetime of commitment to the whole idea of what our common responsibilities are for our children and for each other. It really does take a village, and that's her whole idea.

So I ask you to think about it. I want you to go home tonight and talk at dinner about this FTC report. I want you to talk to the peo-

ple you work with about it. And instead of just railing against the people out there, I want you to think about some of the things that have been said here today and what Patty said about what your responsibilities are.

And I want you to think about what kind of person you really want in the United States Senate when the chickens come home to roost on the whole question of the role of media violence in your children's and your grandchildren's lives and gun safety and whether the schools are open enough and have the right kind of programs for after-school and summer school and whether we're really doing what we need to on family leave and foster care and adoption.

All these issues have to be dealt with together, because I'm telling you there is no more important challenge for any society than maximizing the chance that good people can succeed at work and at their most important work, raising their children. There's nobody better prepared to do that than Hillary.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. in Henry Kauffman Hall at the Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester. In his remarks, he referred to Patty Cathers, director of program and volunteer services, Child Abuse Prevention Services of Roslyn, NY, who introduced the President; Peggy Charren, founder, Action for Children's Television; Andrew J. Spano, Westchester County executive; Eileen Lehrer, president, and Ellen Lazarus, cochair, board of directors, Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester. The President also referred to a September 11 report by the Federal Trade Commission entitled "Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children: A Review of Self-Regulation and Industry Practices in the Motion Picture, Music Recording & Electronic Game Industries."

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative James H. Maloney in Danbury, Connecticut

September 11, 2000

Thank you. Wow! [Laughter] Well, first of all, that's the best talk I ever heard Jim Maloney give. It was amazing. [Laughter] I thought two

things when he was giving that speech: The first thing I thought is, that's the speech everybody ought to be giving around America this