

Washington State, is already ahead of the incumbent Republican Senator, and the other one is nearly ahead. We are even, to a little ahead, in Missouri. We are within five points in Michigan, where our candidate is fabulous but has been badly outspent, and if she can get back up and go all the way, she'll be fine. And I believe we can do right well here if our candidate had enough money.

So it's something I want you to think about because the future of the Supreme Court is at stake; the future of all these policies is at stake. And I can tell you, every single Senate seat really does matter. As President, I know. I mean every single one of them has an enormous impact on the way Americans live and the framework within which we build our future.

So that's it. If you can help Hillary with some more of these contributions, if you know anybody that hasn't made one, may be willing to make a modest contribution to her campaign, it could make a big difference to her. Because

remember, in New York, it's the Democratic Party against the Republican Party, Hillary against her Republican opponent, and then they have 32 other committees, bringing pleasant messages—[laughter]—of every conceivable stripe.

She'll do just fine with it. She showed last week she could take a punch, and she can take a lot of them. But she needs to have something to respond, and if you can help, I'll be profoundly grateful.

Thanks again for everything you've done for Hillary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. at the City Tavern. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Jon S. Corzine, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in New Jersey; and former Gov. George Allen, Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Virginia.

Remarks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia September 17, 2000

Thank you very much. The final sentence of the preamble: "We do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States." Today we come to ordain and establish this Constitution Center, so I begin by thanking Senator Specter, Senator Santorum; Representatives Brady, Borski, and Hoeffel, who are here; Mayor Street and Mayor Rendell; Chairman Bogle; President Torsella; Judge Giles, Judge Becker; Park Service Director Marie Rust and all of your employees; President Rodin; and Lee Annenberg, we thank you and Walter so much for your continuing generosity and vision. And most of all, I'd like to thank the people of Philadelphia, who have contributed so much to make this center a reality.

This is an appropriate thing to do, I think, in the millennial year and in the political season. I thank Senator Specter for the plug for First Lady, and I hope he will not be too severely rebuked at the Republican caucus in a few days. [Laughter]

But if it is the season of political olympics in America, we shouldn't forget that we have over 600 of our athletes halfway across the world in Australia. And I think we ought to give a big hand to the female 400-meter free style relay team, who set a world record in winning a gold medal yesterday. [Applause] I might say, just as an aside, I saw a television special which said that this is the oldest women's swimming team we have ever fielded, and the first time the women's team has ever been older than the men. But I don't think they meant that in the same way I do. I think their average is about 21 years and 6 months. [Laughter]

I bring you greetings, also, from the First Lady, who wanted to be here today, because of her efforts to save the charters of our freedom.

As you may have read, and I hope you have, this weekend at the National Archives in Washington, scientists and engineers unveiled new, state-of-the-art technology to display and better preserve the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and

Declaration of Independence. We have been struggling now for many, many years to show it to the largest possible number of visitors without having the precious old paper erode and the ink bleed away into the mists of memory.

This effort to preserve the documents is part of America's Millennium Project to save our treasures, from Thomas Edison's invention factory to Harriet Tubman's home, from the Old Glory that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the "Star-Spangled Banner" to Abraham Lincoln's summer residence at the Old Soldiers Home in Washington.

It is the largest historic preservation effort in our history. It has garnered already over \$100 million in public and private funds, and I'm very proud of the First Lady for thinking of it and executing it. It will complement this Constitution Center for you to know that the Constitution is alive and well and preserved for all time, along with the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence.

Two hundred and thirteen years ago today, a few hundred feet from where we stand, 39 men signed a document that would change the world. Some of them—Washington, Franklin, Madison—are remembered today as our greatest citizens. In light of the naturalization ceremony just held, I think it's worth noting that 8 of those 39 signers were immigrants, including Alexander Hamilton, born in the West Indies, and James Wilson of Pennsylvania, who spoke with a heavy Scottish brogue.

Those who put their names in the Constitution understood the enormity of what they were attempting to do, to create a representative democracy with a central government strong enough to unify a vast, diverse, then and now politically fractious nation, but a government limited enough to allow individual liberty and enterprise to flourish.

Well, 213 years later, we can say with thanks, they succeeded not only in keeping liberty alive but in providing a strong yet flexible framework within which America could keep moving forward, generation after generation, toward making real the pure ideals embodied in their words.

How have we moved forward? Well, today, our liberties extend not just to white males with property but to all Americans, including those who were just signed in. Our concept of freedom no longer includes the so-called freedom to keep slaves and buy and sell them or to

extract profit from the labor of children. And now our Constitution is the inspiration behind scores of other democratic governments all over the world, from Japan to Poland, from Guatemala to South Africa.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "The Constitution is an experiment, as all life is an experiment." The new center we begin today will tell the story of that experiment, showing how each generation of Americans has been called on not only to preserve liberty but to enhance it, not only to protect the institutions that secure liberty but to renew and modify them to the demands of the present with an eye to the future.

Our generation has also begun to meet that sacred duty, for at the dawn of a new century we are clearly a nation in renewal. Like generations before us, we are renewing the promise of America by meeting the challenges of our time with new ideas rooted in old values: faith and freedom, opportunity and responsibility, family and community.

This new center is a symbol of that broader renewal. It will use the latest technologies to bring alive to visitors the meaning of our founding documents. Perhaps the greatest testament to our national renewal is, we are becoming as a people simultaneously more diverse, as you can see from those who just became American citizens, and more tolerant.

The degree of diversity in America today would probably astound the Founders. But if they thought about it just for a moment, they would recognize it as the inevitable product of their own handiwork. James Madison, himself, predicted America would be made stable by a strong Constitution that would draw from other countries "men who love liberty and wish to partake of its blessings." Even in the beginning we were a diverse country, compared to most.

A few years ago, I went to Germany on a state visit. And I presented to the Chancellor of Germany a copy of the Declaration of Independence, printed in Philadelphia on July 5, 1776, in German, for the German speakers who were already here.

A newspaper way back then wrote, "If the new Federal Government be adopted, thousands would embark immediately to America. Germany and Ireland would send colonies of cultivators of the Earth, while England and Scotland would fill our towns and cities with industrious mechanics and manufacturers."

Well, today, we benefit from the skills and drive of a new wave of immigrants from Nigeria and India, Poland and China, Mexico and Russia, and as you heard, scores of other countries. No country in the world has been able so to absorb large numbers of immigrants and profit by them, yet still somehow find a way to remain one nation.

I believe the reason is that we base national identity in America not on common blood or common history or loyalty to a particular ruler but on a shared belief and a set of political ideas and arrangements. We revere the Constitution because it is at the core of who we are. And I would submit for all the troubling responses in the polls that were cited, one of the reasons that we need this Constitution Center is so people will come here and learn the answers to those questions so they will know why they already feel the way they do, because even people who don't know the answers to the questions at bottom are Americans in the sense that I just mentioned, thanks to 213 years of this Constitution.

Since 1993, 5 million immigrants have chosen to become Americans, more than the total of the previous three decades. This week, 25,000 more are being sworn in in ceremonies across our country, celebrating Constitution Week and Citizenship Day. They gain new rights and freely accept new obligations to play their part in the ongoing experiment in self-government that is our Nation.

I say it again, the final clause of the Constitution's preamble reads, "We do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States." The Founders ordained it when they signed it. The American people have renewed it again and again: in 1789, when we added the Bill of Rights; in the 1860's, when hundreds of thousands gave their lives to ensure that a Union founded in liberty on the proposition that all are created equal would not perish from the Earth in slavery; we renewed it at the coming of the industrial age, recognizing new measures were required to protect and advance equal opportunity and freedom; we renewed it in 1920, when we ratified the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote; we renewed it during the great worldwide Depression of the 1930's, when we saved a free economy for free people by building a social safety net and appropriate regulatory protections; we renewed it in the Constitution's finest sense during World War II

and the cold war, when we stood up to tyrannies that did not believe people could be trusted with freedom; we renewed in 1963, hearing and heeding Dr. King's dream that one day the sons of former slaves and former slaveowners would sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

Today, we enter a new era in human affairs, dominated by globalization—which is a fancy way of saying the world is getting smaller and more interconnected—and an explosion in science and information technology, which will change the way we live and work and relate to each other in ways we can only dimly imagine, at a pace that is truly breathtaking.

We, therefore, must renew our commitment to the charters of freedom and apply their values to the challenges of this new era. Our Constitution protects individual integrity and privacy. What does it mean when all of our genetic information is on a little card and in someone's computer? How can we take this magnificent prosperity that the global economy is producing and spread it to everybody? What are our responsibilities to deal with our brothers and sisters half a world away who are still struggling in poverty and under the grip of AIDS, TB, and malaria, which together kill one in every four people who die every year? What is our responsibility to share our learning in outer space and the deepest oceans with all Americans and with those beyond our borders? How can we be a great nation of free people unless every single child can get a world-class education?

These are only some of the questions the next generation of American leaders will have to contemplate and answer at more and more rapid speeds. But the great thing is, we now have over two centuries of experience to know that we always will need new ideas; we'll always need strong leadership; we'll always need to be open for change. But the Constitution, the Declaration, and the Bill of Rights will always be home base and a good place to return to know what should be the anchor of the changes and the challenges of any new era. That is what this center will give to all Americans.

Finally, let me say, if you read the Declaration of Independence and its commitment to build a more perfect Union, it is easier to understand why the Constitution was constructed as it was. For the Founders, though in many ways ordinary people, were inordinately wise in the ways of social change and the frailties of human nature. And they knew that the Union

would never be perfect but could always be made more perfect.

They knew that we would never fully realize the ideals of the Constitution and the Declaration or the Bill of Rights but that we could always deepen the meaning of freedom, widen the circle of opportunity, and strengthen the bonds of our community. That is what these young immigrants represent today, our future and our steadfast belief that we grow stronger with our diversity in a global world, as long as we reaffirm our common humanity and our common fidelity to the freedom and values of the Constitution.

Now, my fellow Americans, about 4 months from now I will change jobs, and I will be restored to a title that Harry Truman once said was the most important title any American could have, that of citizen. No American citizen in this Republic's history has been more fortunate or more blessed. I hope for the rest of my life I can do a good job with that title. I hope all these young, new citizens behind me will realize that President Truman was right. As important as our Presidents are, as important as our Congresses are, as important as our judges are and our Governors and our mayors, our philanthropists, our artists, our athletes, this country is great because there are good people who get up every day and do their very best to live their dreams and make the most of their own lives and because this country has a system

enshrined in the Constitution that gives them the maximum opportunity to do just that.

You should be very proud of what you are doing here today to make sure everyone knows why America is a special place and being an American is a great gift. I thank you for that. [Applause]

Now, we're just about done, but I'm going to ask one of our citizens, Susan Yuh, who was born in South Korea, to join me in signing, as everyone else has already done, this steel beam to my right, that will be the founding pillar of a building devoted to our Constitution. I think it's quite fitting that the beam should have the signature of a President, and even more fitting that it should have the signature of a new citizen on her first day as an American.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. on Independence Mall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor John F. Street and former Mayor Edward G. Rendell of Philadelphia; John C. Bogle, chairman, and Joseph M. Torsella, president and chief executive officer, National Constitution Center; James T. Giles, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; Edward R. Becker III, Chief Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; Marie Rust, Regional Director, Northeast Region, National Park Service; Judith Rodin, president, University of Pennsylvania; and Walter H. Annenberg and his wife, Lee, founders, Annenberg Foundation.

Remarks at a State Dinner for Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India

September 17, 2000

And Mr. Prime Minister, on behalf of the American people, let me welcome you again to the White House, along with all your party from India.

I hope that in your time with us, we have at least come close to repaying the warm hospitality with which you and the Indian people greeted me, my family, and our fellow Americans on my visit in March.

One of the most remarkable things to me about our relationship is its scope and its increasing interdependence. There are hundreds of American businesses, foundations, and univer-

sities with long commitments to India. When Americans call Microsoft for customer support today, they're as likely to be talking to someone in Bangalore or Hyderabad as to someone in Seattle.

There are more than one million Indians here in America now, and I think more than half of them are here tonight. [Laughter] And I might say, Prime Minister, the other half are disappointed that they're not here. [Laughter]

Indian-Americans now run more than 750 companies in Silicon Valley alone. In India, the best information available on maternal health