

States to increase adoptions of children waiting in the foster care system.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report of the Trade and Development Agency

September 20, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As required by section 201(d) of the Jobs Through Exports Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-549; 22 U.S.C. 2421(d)), I transmit herewith the annual report of the Trade and Development Agency for fiscal year 1999.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations.

Remarks at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Dinner

September 20, 2000

Thank you. Please be seated. Well, in case you haven't figured it out, I'm the warmup act for Los Lobos—[laughter]—and Nydia Rojas and Elvis Crespo and Tito Puente, Jr.

Let me thank you, Lucille, and all the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus for all you have done with me and for me these last 8 years. I thank the Institute board members for supporting these fine public servants. I thank the members of my administration who have done so much to make sure your concerns were heard, including Maria Echaveste, Mickey Ibarra, Aida Alvarez, Bill Richardson, Louis Caldera. And I understand we have the honorary Hispanic caucus in the Cabinet here tonight, Secretary Herman, Secretary Slater, and Secretary Mineta. I thank them for coming as well.

Because our administration has looked like America, we've been able to—I hope—serve America better. For example, under Secretary Caldera, the Army is cosponsoring a series of public service announcements targeted at young people between the ages of 12 and 14, many of them Hispanic, focusing on the benefits of staying in high school and getting a diploma. I thank him for that, and I thank you for that.

Last week in Philadelphia, I had an incredible experience—really Sunday, the first day of this week. I went there to dedicate and lay the first

construction beam on what will be America's Constitution Center, where people will be able to go to Philadelphia, learn about how we got started as a nation, learn about how the Constitution was put together and what is in it and how it applies through countless decisions of the United States Supreme Court to all Americans down to the present day. I also had the opportunity to help to swear in as new citizens 73 immigrants from 23 different nations.

And I told them something that the American people and the Members of Congress should never forget: 8 of the 39 men who signed the Constitution were immigrants, including Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury, born in the West Indies, and James Wilson of Pennsylvania, who spoke with a heavy Scottish brogue.

From the very beginning, our country has benefited from immigrants. When I went to Germany 4 or 5 years ago, I presented to the German Chancellor a copy of the Declaration of Independence which was printed the day after it was signed, July 5, 1776, in Pennsylvania, in German, because so many of the people who lived in Pennsylvania at that time had German as their first language and spoke limited, if any, English.

It is very important that we not forget that we have always been, we always will be, and God willing, we will always be strengthened by the fact that we are a nation of immigrants.

This has been a great week for me and the Latino community. Yesterday Lucille and the whole Congressional Hispanic Caucus came to see me, and we went over the remaining issues of this year. They, once again, gave me my marching orders. [Laughter] And last night Jimmy Smits had me to the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, and some of you perhaps were there. I had a wonderful time. And tonight I am with you, in all probability, and hopefully, the last American President who does not speak Spanish.

And I say that because I am very proud to have been President of the United States during the time when the Latino community of America truly came of age as a political, a cultural, and an economic force. I thank you for that.

The main thing I came here to do tonight is to say that, a simple thank you. I thank the members of the Caucus for working with Al Gore and me for these last 7½ years. Think of what we have done together that would not have been possible without you, and without all the people throughout America who support you.

Together we passed a new economic plan in 1993, which got rid of the worst deficits in our history, is paying down the debt, and has given us the longest economic expansion in history. It has also given us the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in a generation, a median income for Hispanics rising even faster than for the population as a whole, a million new Hispanic homeowners in the last 5 years.

Together we passed the family and medical leave law, which has given 25 million of our fellow citizens a chance to take some time off from work when there's a newborn baby or a sick family member, without losing their job. Together we passed an historic crime bill that put more police on our streets, take more guns off our streets, give kids more things to do to stay out of trouble and get involved in positive conduct. It was opposed by most of the members of the other party, but today, after 7 years of straight decline, crime is at a 27-year low.

Together we doubled the earned-income tax credit, which cut taxes for 15 million of our hardest working families, including more than

a million Hispanic families. Together we raised the minimum wage, which benefited nearly 2 million Hispanics. And it's high time we raised it again, and I hope you will support that.

Together we doubled funding for education and training and put in place the Hispanic Education Action Plan for programs to improve Latino student outcome. And though there are still troubling gaps, Hispanic students now are scoring higher on math tests, greater percentages are completing high school, graduating from college, and getting advanced degrees. In fact, the college-going rate among Hispanic-Americans has increased by 50 percent over the last 6 years, and the number of children—the number of Latino children in our high schools taking advanced placement tests—which means they mean to go to college; otherwise, why go through all that hassle? [Laughter]. Listen to this—the number of Hispanic children taking advanced placement courses has increased by 500 percent in the last 5 years.

Together we created 100 empowerment zones and enterprise communities, community development banks, doubled small business loans to minorities, tripled them to women. And under the leadership of the Vice President, these empowerment zones have helped to bring thousands of jobs to people in places who have been left behind for too long.

We provided health insurance coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program to 2 million children, and we're determined to add 3 million more. We revolutionized welfare; the welfare rolls have been cut in half. We fought steadily to restore the benefits that were wrongfully cut from legal immigrants, and we're going to keep fighting to restore the Medicaid and CHIP coverage for children and pregnant women who are legally in the United States.

And with the strong leadership of the Hispanic Caucus, we will continue to push the majority in Congress for a vote on the "Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act."

Now, none of this would have happened without you. And I want you to know that all I feel is immense gratitude that the people of my country gave me a chance to serve, to implement the ideas that I brought to the American people in 1992 and 1996, to build a bridge to the new century and the new millennium that we could go across together. But when the Vice President tells you, "You ain't seen nothing yet," I want you to know I believe he is right.

Why? Because we have spent so much time in the last 7½ years trying to turn the ship of state around, and it takes a while to do that. It's like having an ocean liner in the middle of the ocean, and you're trying to avoid an iceberg. Will it be "Titanic" or a happy story? You know you can't do it like this. It takes time. Now we have turned around. We're going in the right direction. We're moving forward together.

And what I want to ask you to do is to think about, what now? You know, we could actually end poverty for all the children of America. We could actually bring economic opportunity, real jobs, to all the communities that have been left behind, from the Native American reservations to the rural communities of the Delta and the Appalachia to the inner cities that still aren't prospering. We could get this country out of debt over the next 12 years, for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. And I might add, if we did that, instead of squandering the surplus on a tax cut that's too big, it would keep interest rates a point lower for a decade, which would save people like many of you in this audience and the people who you represent, in 10 years, \$390 billion in home mortgage costs alone.

Now, so I know this is not a political evening. [Laughter] But it should be an evening for citizenship. So if you want to fulfill these dreams, if you want to meet the challenge of the aging of America when we baby boomers retire and there will only be two people working for every one person on Social Security, if you want Medicare and Social Security not to go broke and you think our seniors deserve prescription drugs, the election matters.

If you want a Patients' Bill of Rights, the election matters. If you want to stick with a strategy to lower crime that lifts children up and keeps guns out of the hands of criminals and kids, the election matters.

I'll tell you something else. If you want to put an end to delay and discrimination against highly qualified minority candidates for the Federal courts, the election matters.

Now, I am proud, as Lucille said, that our administration has appointed more Hispanics to the Federal bench than any in history. But it has been an unbelievable fight. It took 4 years just to get a vote that put the very able judge Richard Paez on the ninth circuit—4 years. Now

we're fighting for another great candidate, El Paso lawyer Enrique Moreno.

Now, listen to this. You would think that the Texas Republicans would be delighted to support someone like Enrique Moreno. He graduated summa cum laude from his university, near the top of his class in law school. A panel of State judges in Texas said he was one of the three best lawyers in west Texas. He got the highest rating from the American Bar Association. So what did the two Senators from Texas say? "He wasn't qualified to be on the Court of Appeals." And I might add, for reasons that escape me, none of the other elected Republicans in Texas have said a word about it.

Now, I can't ask you to vote for anybody tonight. I don't want to endanger your tax exempt status. [Laughter] But if you want an end to this kind of delay and denial, it would really help if you had Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Senators like Hillary in the United States Senate. If you want to see investments made in the enforcement of our gun laws, our civil rights laws, and holding tobacco companies accountable and shrinking the citizenship backlog at INS, it would help if you had Al Gore and Joe Lieberman, and José Serrano as chairman of the House Committee on Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary Appropriations.

If you believe that there should be new market investment incentives to spread prosperity to people in places that have been left behind, it would help if you had Al Gore and Joe Lieberman, and Nydia Velásquez as chairman of the House Small Business Committee. If you want the interest of the American people to be the agenda of America's Government, it would help if you had Al Gore and Joe Lieberman, and if you had in a leadership position Bob Menendez, the vice chair of the House Democratic caucus.

There's an old Mexican proverb that says, *El que no siembra, no levanta*; he who does not sow does not harvest. In my lifetime, which, unfortunately, is longer than most of yours in this audience—and most days I'm all right about it—our country has never had a chance like this. When I became President on January 20, 1993, I dreamed that I could leave office with my country in the position to make the most of this magnificent new millennium; to stay on the far frontiers of science and technology and do it in a way that helps all people, not just a few; to lift us all together; to build a future

of our dreams for our children; to go forward as one America. But anybody in this audience who is over 30 knows that sometimes it's harder to make a good decision when times are good than when they're tough. [Laughter]

I laugh, you know—the American people took a big chance on me in 1992. I can only imagine how many people walked into the polling place on election day in 1992 and said, “I wonder if I should really vote for that guy. I mean, President Bush says he's just a Governor from a small southern State. I don't even know where it is.” [Laughter] “He's probably too young for the job. Oh, what the heck, it's not much of a chance. The country is in the ditch.” [Laughter] I mean, that's basically what happened. It wasn't that big a chance. [Laughter]

Now, that's not true anymore. It's not true anymore. And we all have a responsibility to our fellow Americans to think deeply about this election, to dream of what we want America to look like in 10 years or 20 years, and then to go out and choose the course that will take us there. That is what we have to do.

And this is the last thing I want to tell you. I'm very proud of all these economic advances. I'm glad of the contributions we made to a strong economy that enabled more of you than ever before to afford a ticket to come here tonight. I'm glad about that. But if I could only have one wish as President for you as I leave, even more than continued prosperity, I would wish for us to have the wisdom and the tenderness to go forward as one America, across all the lines that divide us.

We are a good people. We are a smart people. We'll do fine in the face of all adversity. But we still have a lot to let go of. We've got to learn to trust each other, even if we come

from different cultures and different backgrounds. We've got to learn to feel deep, abiding, bursting pride at our roots and our faith and still respect those who are different and understand that our common humanity is the most important fact of life there is.

If we do that, if we do that, believe me, you ain't seen nothing yet. And so I say, I had a wonderful time. Even the bad days were good, thanks in no small measure to many of you who always were the wind at my back. But believe me, it's there for you now. And when you hear all this fabulous music tonight, and the Vice President comes out here and says in his emotional and heartfelt Spanish what he's got to say—[laughter]—you just keep thinking one thing. I don't want you to forget, in a quiet place, this country operates not just by the leaders but, more important, by the people.

Harry Truman said when he left the White House he would resume the most important title any American could have, that of citizen. And you are what makes this country great. You are what makes this country go. If you liked the last 8 years, if you believe you ain't seen nothing yet, you must ask yourselves, what do I have to do to make sure the right choice is made, and what do I have to do to build one America? If we all do that, the best is yet to be.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:23 p.m. at the MCI Center. In his remarks, he referred to singers Nydia Rojas and Elvis Crespo; musician Tito Puente, Jr.; Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, chairwoman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute; and actor Jimmy Smits.

Remarks at a Reception for Governor Jeanne Shaheen September 20, 2000

Thank you very much. Thank you. First thing I would like to say is that back when we were taking pictures, a number of you commented on my dress. I'm here to take your drink order before the movie begins. [Laughter]

Actually, this is a terrific theater, and I would like to thank the owners who are here. Our

hosts are here tonight, and I think we should give them a big hand. [Applause] This is a beautiful place, a project, I might add, financed by the Small Business Administration loan.

I want to thank my friend Parris Glendening for being here. We've had a wonderful partnership with Maryland. You know, they're kind of