AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

impressive rate of economic growth, because there are many issues that we need to consult on and work together on, the upcoming Summit of the Americas in December, and Haiti, just to mention two, as well as our bilateral economic relationships, which are very important. So I wanted to see him, and I'm honored that he was able to make time to come up here and have this meeting.

Q. Mr. President, what is the position of your administration vis-a-vis the U.S. trade agreement with Chile as opposed to entering through NAFTA? Would you favor Chile entering through NAFTA or through a free trade agreement which is bilateral?

President Clinton. I don't really have an opinion on that at this time. I want to discuss it with the President, and I want our advisers to be able to discuss it and just determine the best way.

The most important thing for me now is to get the Congress to approve the fast-track negotiations with Chile so that we can accelerate this economic partnership whichever way we decide to go. That's very important to me to know that the Congress will support that, because I have said all along that I thought we ought to move next with this free trade agreement to Chile, and that that could be a model for all of South America.

So my emphasis now has been getting the Congress to support this. I think they will. The President's met with Members of our Congress in both parties. And in terms of which is the best way, I want to hear his view on that, and then I want to let our people talk it through, because I just want the objective to be achieved. I don't have an opinion about which is the best way to get there.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Fundraiser for Senators Jim Sasser and Paul Sarbanes

June 28, 1994

Thank you very much, Senator Graham and Paul and Christine and Jim and Mary. I'm delighted to be here tonight in your behalf with a lot of old friends. I thank all the Members of the Senate for coming.

Senator Graham really is sorry that Paul and Jim didn't bring their charts. When he was Governor of Florida, he spent 80 percent of his time, when he wasn't out doing those work days on television, with charts, showing the people of Florida why they should change whatever it was they were doing at the time. [*Laughter*] And I love charts, too. I was made an honorary member of the Senate's "Wonk Caucus," chaired by Sarbanes and Sasser. Together we put more people to sleep than all the pills designed for that purpose in the history of the country. [*Laughter*]

I want to say seriously, I appreciate what Bob Graham said. You know, I served with I think 150, roughly 150 Governors. Unlike him, I never could get a promotion until this job came along. [*Laughter*] So I kept just struggling to hold on to my job. And I was a Governor for 12 years, over a 14-year period. And I served, literally, with 150 Governors. And if you asked me to go in a private room and write down the five best Governors I served with out of 150, Bob Graham would be on that list. And I say that because he had a quality as Governor which I have seen Paul and Jim bring to their work in the Senate, and of course Bob, and that is that he had this crazy idea when he got elected—really a rather radical idea in today's politics—that his job was to accomplish something, not to position himself, not to blame his opponents, not to divide his State but to actually do something, that he got hired to show up for work every day with an agenda which would be implemented which would change the lives of the people for the better.

Now, you may think that it's self-evident, but the longer I stay here the more I wonder whether that is the real purpose of politics for many people. Senator Mitchell has labored in the Senate, oftentimes to try to put together a majority of votes, when the real issue is, is the purpose here to get something done, or is the purpose to just sort of talk about it, position it, use a lot of rhetoric and spray a lot of blame?

It's interesting because I think, in a State when people get a feel for who you are and what you stand for, they will stick with you

through tough times and sometimes unpopular decisions if they know that you hired on to do what you honestly think is right and you're working as hard as you can to do it.

I am really elated at the prospect of Paul Sarbanes becoming the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee. And I frankly can't imagine what my life would be like if Jim Sasser were not the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. He sort of took all my good lines, but it is true, you know, that the other party spent years and years and years telling us how terrible the Government was and how terrible Government spending was and how terrible the deficits were. And they were able to get away with it, even though the evidence was that in every single year the Congress, whatever you think of its faults, always actually spent a little less money than Republican Presidents asked them to spend. So the thing was out of hand.

Now finally, we got a little partnership. We got in harness. We got two budgets passed on time, the budget resolutions, for the first time in 17 years. We're going to have 3 years of deficit reduction for the first time since Harry Truman was President of the United States, and they're scurrying around to say, "Well, they must have done it in the wrong way, and it doesn't count."

Well, one of the things I want to say to you today is that when you get in a tight and you have difficult decisions to make, whether it is in public life, business life, or personal life, there is often no painless alternative. Every one of us knows some experience we had as a human being, growing up as a child, in our early adulthood, struggling to help our family, something where we knew we had to make a decision that would determine whether we would go forward, whether we would continue to grow as people, whether we'd be able to be faithful to our commitments and our values. And we looked around, oftentimes for a long time, for the easy way to get that done. But there just was no easy way. And if you take the difficult way, it turns out to be better than walking away and living with the consequence of that. Now, that's what Jim Sasser has done in the Senate. That's what Paul Sarbanes has done in the Senate. That's what we are trying to do in this administration.

I could have written the ads in my head I now see played—I'm seeing played in all these races about our terrible budget plan and what a terrible tax increase it was. Well, the fact is it raised income taxes on 1.2 percent of the American people, including most of the people in this room—[*laughter*]—which says a lot about your devotion to your country. It says a lot about your devotion to this country. It lowered income taxes on one-sixth of our taxpayers, about 16 million of them, with about 50 million Americans all over—around 20 percent of our total population and their families, working people with families.

It made 90 percent of the small businesses in this country eligible for a tax cut. A lot of those folks are active members of the NFIB, and they may be involved in the Republican Party. And the Democrats gave them a chance to get a tax cut if they reinvested more money in their business. Most of them may not know it, but it's true. It happened. And it happened because of that economic plan.

That economic plan gave 20 million college students the chance to borrow money at lower interest rates with better repayment terms, so they could continue their education. It brought interest rates down. It got investment going. It started this economy up again. We've now had 3.4 million new jobs since January, 3.1 million private sector jobs, more than 3 times as many private sector jobs as were created in the previous 4 years.

Now, I still believe that the purpose of public life is to move our collective ball forward, to advance the interest of our people, to do things that will bring us together and to move us forward. And our system will not work unless there are people in the Congress of the United States willing to make the tough decisions even when it is difficult, at least in the short-run, willing to believe that they can still convince their constituents in the old-fashioned way, not withstanding the blizzard of 30-second ads, not withstanding the palaver content of our public discourse, still willing to believe that they can go home and lay it on the line and talk to their folks in the country crossroads, in the small civic clubs, in the union halls, on the factory floors, in the sale barns, and make the sale.

And I cannot begin to tell you how much my respect for and appreciation for the Members of the Congress that are willing to take these kinds of risks and make these kinds of decisions because they know we cannot grow as a country at a time of profound change, just like a person can't grow, without making tough decisions—my respect has grown immeasurably. And Jim and Paul, they don't go around saying, ''Look at me; I'm a brave soul.'' They just sort of show up for work every day. And they do right by America.

The other party, they talk all the time about how tough they are on crime. And the crime bill won't be like the budget where we got zero votes from the other side. We're going to get some Republican votes. And we've always had some. But that bill languished in gridlock for over 5 years, and now we're on the verge of passing it. And it's profoundly important. We just decided to put aside gridlock and get after it.

This bill does something that I don't think a lot of Americans have focused on. Since 1965 the violent crime rate's increased sevenfold. Now the crime rate is kind of tapering off, but the irrational rate of crime among younger Americans, unfortunately, is still going up. But the crime rate has gone up 7 times, the violent crime rate, sevenfold since 1965. In 1965, America had 500,000 police officers. In 1994, America has 550,000 police officers. So we spent a fortune expanding our courts, a double fortune expanding our prisons, when if we had spent some money expanding our police forces, we not only would catch more criminals, we would prevent more crimes by having police presence out there in the neighborhoods, knowing the kids, knowing the neighbors, understanding what can be done. This Congress, with the leadership of these people, is going to put 100,000 more police officers on the streets. It's very important.

I could go through issue after issue after issue, but if you look at the things that will shape the future for the children of this country, whether it's immunizing millions of more kids, putting tens of thousands more children in Head Start, securing the kind of future that our children need, these two men have been there.

Now, let's face facts. In addition to the extraordinary nature of the public debate today, which so often is completely disconnected with what is actually being done and what will affect the lives of our people, we know that historically, in the 20th century, there's only been one election in which the sitting President's party actually picked up seats in both Houses of the Congress at midterm. Why is that? That's partly because of what Governor Cuomo says, ''We always campaign in poetry, but we have to govern in prose.'' So at midterm people say, ''Well, the novel wasn't quite as good as the song was.'' [*Laughter*] ''The movie was better than the book.'' The hard work sometimes takes some time not only to bear fruit but to be felt.

But I say to you that this year, given the nature of our national politics, that would be a mistake. The people say they want change. We're giving it to them. We had an historic first year last year. Since World War II, our first year was the most productive in partnership between the President and Congress of any except President Eisenhower's and President Johnson's first years, the first year in 60 years when there was no Presidential veto; breaking gridlock—7 years for family leave, 7 years for the Brady bill, 5 years on the crime bill, 7 years on the worldwide trade agreement. No one thought we could get the assault weapons ban passed in the House, even after the Senate passed it.

This thing is rocking along. But we have got to keep people in the Congress who have this old-fashioned notion that the founders were right, that this is not a place where people just position themselves and throw blame grenades across the ramparts of their opponent's defenses. It is a place where people are supposed to show up for work every day and do things which will affect the lives of their constituents. That is really what is at issue.

And I implore all of you—I thank you for giving this money. And I agree with what Jim said about roots: Everybody has got to have them. And they'll need the money for the defense to rebut some of the grenades. But I ask you to think more deeply about what this election means for the continuation of progress in this country.

We're doing our best to face the health care issue. Why? We had 100 health care professionals in yesterday to the White House from the academic medical centers. We had people from Washington State; we had people from Senator Exon's State of Nebraska; we had people from all over the country. And their spokesperson read an agreed-upon statement calling for health care coverage for all Americans. He said a very profound thing. He said, "Everybody wants to keep what's best about American medicine and fix what's wrong about our health care system. And that's a good thing." He said, "What I don't think people have focused on is we're getting to the point where you can't keep what's best unless you do fix what's wrong."

And he went on to describe the inordinate pressures our great medical schools are facing, keeping their patients and paying for their care and having enough money to train doctors and continue to make progress, because medical schools used to be able to pass along the cost of operation to people who would pay it. If they took poor patients, the Government didn't reimburse them at the full cost, but they got a little extra program from the Government, and they passed the rest of it along to wealthy businesses who had well-insured people coming there. And if people showed up without any insurance, well, they'd do the same thing.

But now all the businesses are becoming much more competitive; they have to lower the cost of health care, so they're not there. And the doctor went on to say, "They say if we give coverage to everybody, well, we'll be rationing health care." He said, "We're rationing health care today. We decided 39 million can't have it. Everybody else figured out how to solve this problem; all these other nations have. But we ration that."

Now, the point I want to make is not to give another speech for my health care program, the point I want to make is this: This is one of those kind of growing pain issues. If there were a simple, easy answer, somebody would have done this before. And I would never have been elected President. The American people took a chance on me because I said I wanted to move beyond the dogmas, the partisan fights, to grow the economy, to break gridlock, to make Government work for ordinary people. This is one of those growing pain issues. We either will decide to do something that is a little difficult today to give ourselves a much better future tomorrow, or we will not.

The chances of America meeting not only this challenge but all the challenges—I'm telling you, for the next 10 or 20 years there are going to be a lot of very tough questions facing this country. The chances of our meeting those challenges in the proper way depend as much as anything else on the ability of the people to sort through the high-temperature rhetoric to the true reality of the spirit, the soul, the mind, and the courage and the real character of their candidates. It depends, in other words, on whether we will have the capacity to reward people like Jim Sasser and Paul Sarbanes for serving well and bravely. I hope we will, and I believe we will.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. in the Crystal Ballroom at the Sheraton Carlton. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Sasser, wife of Senator Sasser, and Christine Sarbanes, wife of Senator Sarbanes.

Remarks to the National Academy of Sciences

June 29, 1994

Thank you. Now, the next time someone asks me—some irate, self-proclaimed expert in these matters—asks me, why in the wide world did you ever appoint Tim Wirth at the State Department, I'll say, "Well, I had to get Ted Turner up off the floor." [*Laughter*] "Didn't have much to do with public policy; couldn't stand to see a man with all that energy prone for the rest of his life. Seemed like an incalculable waste of human potential." [*Laughter*]

Thank you. Thank you, Ted, and thank you, Jane. When I was down in Atlanta the other day to do the global press conference—which is one of the most exciting experiences I have had as the President or, indeed, in my entire public life, and I loved meeting all the journalists from around the world and trying to answer their questions and commu-