

1998 Elections Results and the Impeachment Inquiry

Q. Mr. President, do you think the election results will have an impact, or should have an impact on the impeachment inquiry?

The President. That's in the hands of Congress and the American people. I've said that before; I'll say it again. I have nothing else to say about that.

Q. Mr. President, the Republicans have made no secret of the fact they intend to look at these elections and draw a lesson in terms of how they conduct an impeachment inquiry. What lesson would you hope they draw from these elections on that point?

The President. That's a decision for them to make. I'm not involved in that, and I'm not going to comment on it. I think that the lesson all people should draw is that the people who were rewarded were rewarded because they wanted to do something for the American people. They wanted to do something to pull this country together and to move this country forward.

If you look at all the results, they're clear and unambiguous. The American people want their business, their concerns, their children, their families, their future addressed here. That's what the message of the election was. And because the Democrats were able to do that in a unified fashion, even while being badly outspent and while running against a tide of history that goes back to, really to 1822, they were able to have an astonishing result. And I'm grateful for that.

But I think that people of both parties who care about these issues and want to pull the country together should now put the election behind us, put Social Security reform and education and health care reform before us, and go forward. That's what I want to do.

1998 Elections and President's Policies

Q. [Inaudible]—the outcome is a vindication of your policies?

The President. I think it is a vindication of the policies and of the general policy of putting partisanship behind progress and of putting people before politics and of trying to find ways to bring people together instead of to divide them. It was clearly a vindication of the message that the Democrats put out there on education, health care, Social Secu-

rity and the minimum wage, campaign finance reform, the environment, a number of other things.

A lot of people worked very hard in this election—the Vice President did; the First Lady did; a lot of people did—but I think the American people basically said to all of us—all of us—“We sent you there to work for us, and we want you to find a way to do it, to address the challenges we face and to bring this country together and move this country forward.” I think that was the loud, clear, completely unambiguous message of the election.

Governor-Elect Jesse Ventura of Minnesota

Q. [Inaudible]—the election of Ventura in Minnesota—

The President. I don't know. I think that you're going to have a lot of politicians spending time in gyms now. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on the Russia-United States Agreement To Provide Food Aid to Russia

November 4, 1998

I am pleased to announce that a U.S. team will begin today to finalize an agreement with the Government of Russia on a program to provide at least 3.1 million metric tons of food. This program will help sustain Russians through a serious food shortage this winter as well as their country's continuing economic distress. In addition, this agreement will bolster American farmers and ranchers who have been hit hard by an agricultural crisis here. We will be prepared to consider additional assistance if necessary.

The program is being developed under the auspices of the binational commission chaired by Vice President Gore and Prime Minister Primakov. Our negotiating team will work with their Russian counterparts to ensure that our assistance is distributed properly and exempted from taxes and customs duties. These are key elements to a successful program.

Memorandum on a Guidebook for Victims of Domestic Violence

November 4, 1998

Memorandum for the Director of the Office of Personnel Management

Subject: Guidebook for Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is one of the most serious public health issues and criminal justice issues facing our Nation. About 30 percent of female murder victims are killed by intimates each year. Women aged 16–24 experience the highest rates of intimate violence. In 1996, women experienced an estimated 840,000 incidents of rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault at the hands of intimates. While this number has declined from 1.1 million incidents in 1993, we must strive to eliminate domestic violence both for its effects on victims as well as on their children. Domestic violence does not discriminate—it affects individuals of every age, race, gender, class, and religion.

My Administration is committed to fighting the scourge of domestic violence. As part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, I fought for and signed into law the historic Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which provides a comprehensive approach to domestic violence, both through prosecuting offenders and providing assistance to victims. Through VAWA, my Administration has provided almost half a billion dollars through STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) grants to the states for law enforcement prosecution, and victim services to prevent and respond to violence against women. The extension of the Brady Law prohibits anyone convicted of a domestic violence offense from owning a firearm. The Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act of 1996 makes it a Federal crime to cross State lines intending to injure or harass another person.

In 1995, I established the Violence Against Women Office at the Department of Justice, elevating the fight against domestic violence to the national level for the first time. Since 1996, the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) has provided immediate crisis intervention, counsel-

ing, and referrals to those in need, responding to as many as 10,000 calls each month.

Domestic violence affects all aspects of our society—the family, the community, and the workplace. As the Nation’s largest employer, the Federal Government has tried to set an example for private employers to protect and provide assistance to workers who are victims of domestic violence. In 1995, I signed an executive memorandum requiring all Federal departments to begin employee awareness efforts on domestic violence. Last year, the Vice President announced that the Office of Personnel Management had developed a guidebook for dealing with workplace violence that outlines a wide array of strategies for preventing violence at work and for helping supervisors, security, and employee assistance staff to recognize the signs of violence, including domestic violence.

Building upon these efforts, it is important to provide a resource guide to the thousands of Federal employees across the country, whether they are a victim of domestic violence or a family member, neighbor, friend, or co-worker of someone who is being abused. I accordingly direct you to prepare within 120 days a guidebook that will (1) assist Federal employees who are victims of domestic violence by providing up-to-date information about available resources and outline strategies to ensure safety; and (2) help those who know a Federal employee who is being abused to prevent and respond to the situation. This guidebook should list private as well as public resources such as counseling, law enforcement, workplace leave policies, and substance abuse programs. In developing this guidebook, you should consult with all interested parties, including the private sector and other Federal agencies and offices—particularly, the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services.

This guidebook, in conjunction with my Administration’s continuing efforts to combat domestic violence, will help to promote the safety of all Federal workers and their families.

William J. Clinton