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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, March 10, 2000

Exchange With Reporters in San Jose, California

March 3, 2000

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of the idea of a Gore-Feinstein ticket?

The President. I think very highly of it. And I think she is immensely talented and would be good at anything. But this is a decision that the Vice President should make after he wins the nomination. And it's not done yet. So I would recommend that all these questions be deferred until after we know for sure that he's the nominee, and then you should ask him.

Q. How would you assess the Republican strategy using you to tarnish their Presidential candidates? How do you assess it?

The President. I don't know. You know, they've got to do what they've got to do. I wish—when I saw the Vice President and Senator Bradley in their last debate, I know that the conventional wisdom was it wasn't very interesting because they agreed on too much. But what I thought is, how fortunate we are to have people that know that much and care that much about things that will actually affect people's lives, instead of grab the day's headlines.

And I thought there was quite a remarkable contrast between the substantive level of knowledge and discussion in that debate and the one I heard last night. That's the only observation I want to make. I shouldn't—they can run their own campaigns. They don't need to have me commenting. I shouldn't get in the way of the Republicans or the Democrats right now. I'm not running. I'm enjoying watching it.

Q. But is this a campaign—[*inaudible*].

The President. Well, time will tell, won't it. The voters are in charge in this deal, not me.

Maine Initiative on the Digital Divide

Q. Can I clarify? The seventh graders who are going to get the laptops, can you tell me more about——

The President. Oh, yes. That's Maine. It's a great story. Angus King in Maine, it's great, he's got a system to give every seventh grader in the State—[*inaudible*]

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:30 p.m. at the Novell Headquarters. In his remarks, the President referred to former Senator Bill Bradley and Gov. Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in San Francisco, California

March 3, 2000

Thank you very much. The first thing I would like to say to all of you, after thank you for the warm welcome, is that this is not the first time I have come here to campaign for Senator Feinstein's reelection. In fact, I'm an old hand at this. I came here in '94 to campaign for Senator Feinstein's reelection, and she stayed in Washington; I had to do it all by myself. [*Laughter*] So it's nice to be here with the evidence of my argument. I thank you very much.

I also want to thank Senator Barbara Boxer and Stu for being here, and Representative Barbara Lee, who is also off to a very fast start. The women from California in the Senate and the House have defied all of the preconceptions about how long it takes to become effective in the Congress. It could have something to do with that practical instinct of worrying more about what you're doing than where you're sitting. And they have really, really done a good job.

I thank the McCarthy's for chairing this event. And as you said, I can't remember anybody who ever got more done in her first term in the Senate than Dianne Feinstein. And I want you to know, I'm here for many reasons—and I'm not running for anything—[*laughter*]—and on most days I'm okay with it. [*Laughter*] But I care a great deal about not whether we're going to change but how we're going to change and where we're going from here.

And one of the things that I always admired about Dianne Feinstein and her husband, Dick—who's been giving me training in how to be a Senate spouse—[*laughter*]—Stu Boxer and Dick and I decided that we would start right now planning for next year. We're looking for a fourth—[*laughter*]—for golf, for tea, for whatever, we're open. [*Laughter*] Life's funny, isn't it? I mean, really, it's great. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, one of the things that I really admire, maybe the thing I admire most about Dianne Feinstein is, first of all, she cares about a lot of things. How many conversations have we had about China, about Tibet, about different parts of the world; about saving the California redwoods, which meant a lot to me, too; about setting aside the desert—now we have two national parks—it's meant a lot to me, too; about taking on this gun issue, which I started to try to do with the Brady bill concept as Governor more than 16 years ago, and I backed off, to my everlasting regret. When I became President, I promised myself as long as I was standing I would do it. And she's been a great ally, and I thank her for that.

But one thing that Dianne does that sometimes politicians in both parties, especially when you get in Washington and you get all caught up in this atmosphere, you know, and you spend all your time watching talk shows—[*laughter*]—do you realize that if you've got a halfway good cable selection, you don't ever have to watch anything but talk shows anymore? [*Laughter*] And do you realize to get on one, all you have to do is take a firm position and never change your mind, and it's better if you don't know anything. [*Laughter*] Actually, if you have any evidence, any background, any real policy knowledge, it's a terrific encumbrance because you're supposed to be shouting to great effect on these programs. [*Laughter*] Now, we're all laughing, but you know it's pretty close to the truth. [*Laughter*]

And Dianne, you know, she's like me. We're still under the illusion that when you elect us to these things, they're actually jobs, and we're supposed to get up and go to work every day and like your job. It yields to effort. I mean, it really makes a difference if you pass a few days in the headlines to figure out what actually ought to be in the bill. And then if you actually pass a law, it can really change people's lives.

Now, you're laughing, but I'm telling you, you have no idea how hard it is to concentrate on your job if you live in Washington today. Barbara is nodding her head. Representative Lee is nodding her head. We live in this sort of constant culture of critiquing and carping and talking and who's up and who's down and who's in and who's out. And I wanted to be here tonight—I'm proud to show up for somebody who still believes being a United States Senator is one of the most important jobs in the world and with effort you can get results which change people's lives for the better. And that is the measure of public service, and she fulfills it in an astonishing way.

Now, the second reason I'm here is to tell you I want you to go vote on Tuesday. I can't vote in this primary, but I hope you'll vote. You've got a big ballot. You'll have an opportunity to vote for things that will affect your future and to send a signal where California is. I hope you'll vote, as Dianne said, for proposition 26. Why? Because it'll build people up; because we're going to have 2 million teachers retire in the next few years as our student bodies get larger; because we've got, already, untold numbers of kids in schools that are either overcrowded or tumbling down; and because California has shown a commitment to turn around failing schools, to adopt charter schools, to try things that will work. And you need to get all the roadblocks out of your way to building your children's future.

And for me, I hope you'll vote against proposition 22 because—[*applause*]—now, wait a minute. Calm down. I want to say—I'll say more about this in a minute—because

however you stand on the question of gay marriage—and I realize that San Francisco is different from the rest of California, is different from the rest of America. But that's not what is at stake here. This initiative will have no practical effect whatever. This is a solution in search of a problem that isn't there.

So people are being asked to vote on this to get everybody in a white heat and to divide people at a time when—you know, look around, folks, we just had this little 6-year-old girl killed in Michigan by a 6-year-old boy who got a gun that was stolen, that he shouldn't have been able to get his hands on. That's a problem we ought to be working on. You had a guy flip out in western Pennsylvania and start shooting people at random, apparently out of his imagined grievance that had some racial basis. You had a guy in Los Angeles shoot at Jewish kids—kids—who were going to school, just because they were Jewish. And then he killed a Filipino postal worker just because he was a Filipino and he worked for the Federal Government; he had double satisfaction. You had Matthew Shepard stretched out on a rack in Wyoming. You had James Byrd dragged to death in Texas. You had this guy who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God, but did believe in white supremacy, kill a Korean Christian walking out of his church and the former basketball coach of Northwestern, an African-American, last year. And I could go on and on.

We've had all the turmoil in New York City over this Diallo case. And I don't want—as I said before, I don't pretend for a moment to second-guess the jury. I didn't sit there and listen to the evidence. But I know most people in America of all races believe that if it had been a young white man in a young, all-white neighborhood, it probably wouldn't have happened. That doesn't mean they were guilty under criminal law. And the Justice Department is looking into that and the Civil Rights Division, and that's the way to handle that.

But what it does mean is, there's this huge gulf out there, still, in too many places where people wonder if they can be treated fairly. So what I'm trying to do—the reason I ran for President was that the country was in trouble. California was in real trouble back in '92, and Washington was dominated by sort of a talk show mentality—and the Congress, too, and in the White House. "Did you get your 10 seconds on the news tonight?" And the only way you could get it is if you were bombing the other side. And there was the liberal position, and there was the conservative position. There was the Democrat position, and there was a Republican position, and we were supposed to get in here and basically fight. And it didn't matter if anything ever got done.

And I thought to myself: You know, I've been a Governor for 10 years. I thought: If I ran my State that way, we'd be in the ditch; if you ran your business that way, you would be broke; and if we ran our homes that way, the divorce rate would be 100 percent. I mean, this is—it was crazy. And what I want you to think about tonight is this. I thank Dianne and others who have been so generous. So many of you said to me tonight kind things about my service for which I am grateful. But I want you to think about that tonight.

Elections are about the future. America has stayed young by thinking about tomorrow. And the point I want to make to you, if you like the fact that America is doing well, the only way we can continue to do well is to keep striving to do better, because the world is changing very rapidly, and because there are still unsolved problems and unseized opportunities in this country. And that's what this election is about.

Dianne mentioned a few of them. How are we going to keep the economy going? How are we going to bring economic opportunity to people in places that have been left behind: the Mississippi Delta, where I come from; the Rio Grande Valley, where I was last week; the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and other reservations where unemployment runs as high as 70 percent; the inner-city neighborhoods in California and elsewhere where there is still an unemployment rate 2, 3, 4 times the national average. What are we going to do to reach them? The rest of us need that. If you want to keep doing well, you've got to try to do better. Why? Because if you invest there, you get inflation-free

growth that benefits everyone else. We're living in a time where, economically, doing the morally right thing happens to be good for you, too. Equal pay for equal work for women is morally right. It's good for the economy. Raising the minimum wage is good for the economy. Closing the digital divide is good for the economy.

I was out in northern California a couple of months ago, and I was with some eBay executives who informed me that 20,000 Americans now make a living on eBay, not working for eBay, trading on eBay. And they've done a profile of these people and, lo and behold, they found that a lot of them used to be on welfare. So what happened? That little computer—when the digital divide was bridged—I believe intelligence is equally distributed across racial and income lines. And I grew up in one of the poorest places in America, and some of the smartest people I ever met, I had known by the time I was 10 years old. I've always felt that luck had something to do with the fact that I was standing here, even though all politicians want you to believe they were born in log cabins they built themselves. [*Laughter*]

But anyway, consider this. What does it mean that 20,000 people are making a living on eBay and some of them used to be on welfare? It means if you bridge the digital divide, you collapse the distance not only between people who are physically isolated from markets and opportunities but may be isolated from bank loans, isolated from education, isolated from other things. So it's a big question.

How are you going to educate all these kids? I mentioned proposition 26. California is doing better, with the most diverse student body in the country. But I can tell you, we've got a lot to do. But we know what to do. I was laughing with some of my old Governor friends the other day. We didn't always know what to do. Now we know how to turn failing schools around. It's just a question of whether we're prepared to invest the money and the time and the effort and the discipline and the accountability and give the support to the kids in trouble with after-school and summer school and mentoring and other programs to do what needs to be done. But we know what to do now.

How are you going to help people to balance work and family? Are we going to do more about child care or not? I could go on and on. How are we going to make efforts to continue to grow the economy and improve the environment? It is now no longer necessary to degrade the environment to grow the economy. This is a digital economy. We don't have to do that anymore.

And for those of you that are younger than me, I'll make you a prediction: Within 20 years it will become clear, and probably within a decade, that the only way to improve the economy is to continue to improve the environment. There is a trillion-dollar market out there for people who are committed to new technologies to combat global warming.

Now, how are we going to make the most of the scientific technical revolution? What does it mean that we're going to sequence the human genome? What will it be like when we can cure all kinds of cancers when there are just a few cells forming, so there's no possibility of metastasis? What will it mean when we can block the defective genes that cause Alzheimer's or diabetes or Parkinson's? What will it mean? If you live to be 65 in America, your average life expectancy is already 82. Dianne told me tonight that there were three people that she knew of that were 90 years old in this audience. Can you imagine? Just 10 years ago you'd never go to a group like this, at this hour of the night, and find three people who were 90 years old. True. [*Laughter*] Ten years from now—10 years from now you will come to a meeting like this, and there will be 25 people that are 90 years old.

Now, what does all this mean to us? What does it mean to say we're in a global economy, in a global society? What are our responsibilities to those poor people that are clinging for life on those trees in Mozambique tonight? Was I right or wrong to send the NATO planes, the American planes in so that the people could go home in Kosovo? These are big questions.

What are our obligations to the peace process in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in the tribal wars in Africa? What is it that binds us together as a people? That's what this election is about. You've got to think about these big things. Don't get into

this sort of old, broken record kind of cheap slug mentality in this election. This is a big election. And it's not about what will get you 15 seconds on the evening news or what makes for a hard punch on a talk show.

This country is doing well because we have been animated by good ideas, new ideas rooted in basic values: opportunities for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. It's working because we have—our crowd does, in Washington—some basic ideas. We think everybody is important, everyone matters. We think everybody ought to get a chance. We think everybody's got a role to play. We think we all do better when we help each other. That's what we believe.

Now, the results are pretty encouraging. But I am imploring you: Do not be lulled into a false sense of confidence or think for a moment it does not matter whether you keep looking to tomorrow or whether you exert particular efforts to vote in the elections this year.

I want to close with a little story, which will betray my age. [*Laughter*] Over Thanksgiving I had the kids of friends of ours over—Hillary and I had a couple friends and their kids come stay with us. And this one beautiful little girl looked up at me—she was 6 years old—and she said, "How old are you, anyway?" [*Laughter*] And I said, "Well, Mary, I'm 53." And she said, "That's a lot." [*Laughter*]

And to those of you who are younger I will say—and to those of you who are older, you know what I'm saying—it is a lot, but it doesn't take long to live a life, no matter how long it is.

When we passed this milestone this month, and we had the longest economic expansion in history, I went back and studied the last economic expansion in history. Do you know when the record was that we broke? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. Now, let me tell you a little something from my 53 years of life.

In 1964, I finished high school. Our country had been heartbroken by President Kennedy's assassination, but then we had rallied behind President Johnson, and he was wildly popular because we had an economy we thought would go on forever: high growth, low inflation, low unemployment. We were passing civil rights bills right and left in the United States Congress. And most people believed we would actually solve the problems of race through the laws, through Congress and the courts. The Vietnam war had not yet manifested itself in the way it later did. And most people believed that we would prevail in the cold war, which we subsequently did, but most people thought we would do it without torment, turmoil, and division. We were feeling pretty cool in the summer of 1964. We thought we'd have social justice, economic progress, and freedom and national security in the world—and it would just happen. That's what we thought when I graduated from high school.

Not long after that, we had the Watts riots. Not long after that, the streets of every major city were filled with antiwar demonstrations. Within 4 years, when I graduated from college at Georgetown, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy had been killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King had been killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for reelection.

Our country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war, and in just a couple of months President Nixon would be elected President on the first of our campaigns of division. You may remember, he said he was representing the Silent Majority, which meant the rest of us, I guess, were in the loud minority. [*Laughter*] But the message was clear: America is divided into two camps, "us" and "them". And anybody who's not with us is them. And we've been "using" and "them-ing" ever since in some way or another.

And ever since I ran in 1992, I have done my best to heal those breaches and to bring us together and to get us to let go of some of that stuff, that poison, that venom, that need we always seem to have to be divided one from another.

But I tell you this because when I was 18 in 1964, times were just about like they are now, and I thought it would all be fine. And in next to no time, all the wheels ran off, and by 1967 everything was divided. And within a few more months in 1968, within a few more months our expansion came to an end.

I say this to you not as your President but as a citizen. I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children that all of us could be a part of, not just those of us that are wealthy enough to come here but the people that were good enough to serve us tonight, not just those of us that are doing great and have lived most of our lives but those of us that are just beginning.

But I remember. Don't you be overconfident. Don't you be overcasual. You know, in life we're always lucky when we get a second chance, and most of us are lucky enough to have had more than one. But a country is indeed graced by God to get a second chance. I'm glad I helped to build America's second chance these last 7 years. We've got it now. I've waited 35 years to see it.

That's why I'm for Dianne Feinstein. That's why I'm traipsing all over the country trying to get people to think about this. And when this political debate goes on, don't you get caught in all this little stuff. You lift this country up; lift the people in your community up. Tell the people why they ought to vote. Remind them of how we lost our last expansion. Think about all the possibilities for the future. Be big. Be big and remember: We all do better when we help each other, and the only way to keep doing well is to be committed to doing better.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. in the Peacock Court at the Mark Hopkins InterContinental. In his remarks, he referred to Stewart Boxer, husband of Senator Barbara Boxer; Robert J. and Suzanne McCarthy, dinner chairs; Richard Blum, husband of Senator Dianne Feinstein; Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI; Ronald Taylor, who allegedly went on a deadly shooting spree in Wilkinsburg, PA; and West African immigrant Amadou Diallo, who died after being shot in the Bronx Borough of New York City by four police officers, who were acquitted of all criminal charges on February 25 in Albany, NY. The President also referred to California's proposition 26, School Facilities Local Majority Vote, which would permit a simple majority for school bond issues as opposed to the super majority currently required; and proposition 22, Limit on Marriage Initiative, which would ban gay marriages in California. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in San Francisco

March 3, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, I want to thank Sandy and Jean for having me back in this wonderful old home, which I love so much. And I thank the Staglins for cohosting this event, and for the wine, which I could not resist tasting, even though I've been up since 3 o'clock in the morning your time. And I was glad Dianne sort of gave you a little profile of my day, so that if I collapse while speaking, you will be generous enough to make a few exceptions for me. [*Laughter*] And thank you, Eric, for the great time we had earlier in the day with the Aspen Institute over at Novell.

Tonight, I am here, and at the next stop I have to make, I'm trying to help the people who, unlike me, will be running for office in 2000. And I normally get a laugh when I tell people that. Sometimes I wonder why I'm doing this; I'm not running for anything anymore, and most days, it's okay with me.

But I'm here tonight because I want to see the work we've done for the last 7 years and a couple of months continue. I'm here because I remember what California was like in 1991, when I came here. And I see what it's like today. But I also see underneath that the continuing challenges that Dianne mentioned and others, but let's just take the two she talked about: the challenges of the children in the schools and how it manifests itself, ultimately, in your needing 280,000 high-tech workers you can't get; and the challenge of the safety of our streets and our neighborhoods, our homes and our schools.

Let me say, I'd like to make a couple of points very briefly. With regard to education, I've been working on this stuff for over 20 years now, proudly. I was first elected Governor—in 1979 I became a Governor. And I just had the Governors to the White House. It was my 20th Governors' conference as both a Governor and a President. I never

got tired of being Governor, either. I loved it.

But when we started out, I think it's fair to say that we didn't really know what it would take to turn these schools around. We don't have that as an excuse anymore. Dianne talked to you about Chicago. In the Robert Taylor Homes project, which is the poorest part of Chicago, there is an elementary school that has had all the things you talked about, where the district—you heard her say the district has increased its scores by 12 and 14 percent. The poorest schools in 2 years have doubled their reading scores and tripled their math scores. And they were at a very low base, but the point is, that's quite astonishing.

And it is true that in Los Angeles—it's not practical to just ban social promotion anywhere unless you can find the resources to give every child who needs it an after-school program and every child who needs it a summer school program. In Chicago, if they tell you—if you fall within the social promotion standard and you can't be promoted, you do have the option of going to summer school. And you, in all probability, based on their experience, won't be held back if you go to summer school. The summer school in Chicago is now the sixth biggest school district in the United States of America—the summer school.

Now, the point I want to make is that, simply—or let's take—Dianne mentioned the charter schools. When I became President, there was one charter school in all America, in Minnesota. And we began to promote them, and we began to provide funds for States to start them. And now, there are about 2,000. And my goal was to have 3,000 in America by the end of this year; I think we're going to make it.

But we also know we're going to have 2 million teachers retire. What she said about paying the teachers more is absolutely right. There is a national board of professional teaching standards that certifies master teachers. My goal is to get one in every school building in America. If we could do that, we could change the culture of teaching. But they should be paid much more.

When I started the NetDay, the effort to hook all the schools up to the Internet—the Vice President and I were out here in '94—only 3 percent of our classrooms were hooked up to the Internet; today, 63 percent are; 11 percent of our schools then, today 90 percent of our schools. But there are schools so old and decrepit they can't even be wired. And there are other schools—I visited an elementary school in Florida that had, count them, 12 housetrailers out behind it—12, not 1 or 2, 12—full of kids.

That's why it's so important that you pass this proposition 26. We need to do more at the national level, but you do, as well.

Now, what's all that got to do with this election season? Because we could talk about all this stuff until the cows come home. The important thing about every election is that it is a job interview. But the difference is that the people have to redefine the job at every election. So that, in a way, the person they select for the job depends upon how they define the job.

Whenever anyone comes to me and says, "Mr. President, should I run for this, that, or the other job?" I say, "Why do you want it, and what would you do?" It's a job interview. That's what an election is. And when you get it, it's a job. I told the group that we were with earlier that one of the reasons I'm a huge fan of Senator Feinstein is that she really thinks she has a job to do. You heard her up here talking. She is what they derisively refer to as a policy wonk in Washington, as opposed to a talk show maven. And that's what I love about her. That's why the first—you know, she's been in the Senate just a couple of years, and she succeeded in passing that California desert protection legislation and saving the redwoods and passing the assault weapons ban—because she works.

So the first thing I would like to suggest to you, the most important thing you can do as citizens this year is to figure out what you want to do with all this prosperity we have. What do you think the big challenges of America are? What do you think the big opportunities are? If somebody asked you tomorrow why you came here, are you going to say that, "the sponsors made me," or "I owed it to them," or "I wanted to see this house," or "I want to see Clinton one more time before he rides off in the sunset?"

[*Laughter*] I mean, what reasons will you give? Think about this, this is very important.

Because the movement of democracy through time depends upon people taking these moments at election time to be heard. And the choice of the American people for President, for Senator, for Representative, for the Governors, it depends upon what you think it's about. And the whole reason I ran for President in '91 and '92 is I thought that Washington had become clueless. It had become sort of turned in on itself, obsessed with who was up, who was down, who was in, who was out. You had to have a liberal position or a conservative position or a Republican position or a Democratic position, never the twain will meet. "For goodness' sake, don't confuse me with new ideas and just give me my 15 seconds on the news at night."

And it might have been very satisfying for the people who played the political game inside the beltway, but it wasn't working very well in California or Arkansas or any place else I could see. So we did some really dramatic things. We put arithmetic back into the budget. Somebody asked me what was the main economic contribution I made to America in this high-tech age. I said, "I restored arithmetic to Washington." [*Laughter*]

But I think it's very important that you think about this. And what I would like you to at least think about saying to people, if they ask you tomorrow why you came, is that you care about what happens in this election, and you believe in some ways this election is more important than the two that preceded it because of our prosperity and because our prosperity has given us the opportunity and the responsibility to define and build the future.

I mean, in '92, let's face it, folks, we just had to stop the ship from sinking. It took 2 or 3 years to quit baling out of the ship and then to turn it around, to turn the ship of state around. But no one seriously thinks our country will become—so just take the two issues Dianne talked about—until we can give all of these kids a world-class education, have some standards, have some accountability, have adequate support. We know what works. We don't have an excuse anymore. It's just a question of whether we're going to do it.

No one seriously thinks we'll be what we ought to be as a nation until we're much, much safer. And we have to face the fact that a big—and I have worked hard to put 100,000 police on the streets. I'm trying to put 50,000 more out there today in the high crime areas. Dianne and I had an announcement out here in California several years ago on zero tolerance for guns in schools. We've spent fortunes of your money helping schools establish school safety programs.

But it is not rational that we continue to be in the grip of an ideology and a political interest group that says that you can't even put child trigger locks on guns; that you can't extend the background check law that applies if you go to buy a handgun in a gun store, to gun shows that occur on the weekends at these urban flea markets; that we can't have automatic, large capacity ammunition clips made in America, but we can import all the ones we want and hook them up to our guns; that you have to get a license that proves you can drive a car, but you don't have to get a license that proves you've got a clean background and you know how to use a gun. I mean, these things don't make sense, not if you really want a safe country.

But the larger generic question is, what do you propose to do with our prosperity? And I'm as interested in this election as a citizen as I am a President, because I'll be a citizen after the next election. And I feel very privileged to have served, to have played a role in this, to have had something to do with establishing the conditions within which so many of you have built a new economy. You're trying to give Americans the tools to succeed in that new economy, to balance work and family.

We've at least pointed the Congress in the direction of what it would take to get the country out of debt, to save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation so we don't bankrupt our kids and our grandkids, to grow the economy and improve the environment and meet the challenge of global warming, to maximize the impact of science and technology, to deal with the challenges I talked about out at Eric's place today, to the Aspen Institute, about how do

you preserve privacy and security of certain records and still lead to entrepreneurial genius, the Internet—all these big questions.

But I hope you will say, "Look, I'm more interested in politics than ever, because I think we have a special obligation to make the most of this prosperity and a special opportunity to do this." I mean, aren't you proud that you've got a Senator that could go all the way to Chicago, look in a poor school just to see whether what works there might work for kids in California? I mean, see, that's what Senators are supposed to do, not scream at people at 9 decibels and—it's like a version of space aliens, some of these talk shows here. [*Laughter*]

I mean, that's what public service is all about. So I hope you will say that. It's obvious, I think, to you what I—I believe our approach is good. I think saying the role of Government is to provide conditions and give people the tools to make the most of the new economy, to keep us moving forward, to help balance work and family, to get rid of poverty among children, to make this the safest big country in the world, to prove we can improve the economy and improve the environment, and, indeed, that we have to, that the two will become more and more interdependent.

You think I was right in Kosovo? You think I was right in Bosnia? What do you want the next President to do about that? What are our obligations to stand against racial and religious and ethnic and tribal hatred and slaughter? Think I did the right thing to send helicopters to help those people clinging to life on those trees in Mozambique? If you do, that's all part of your world view, what you want America to be like in the 21st century.

And Dianne talked about what I said before—I won't try to replicate the speech I gave, but what moved the audience, and I will say it in less eloquent terms here, because I want you to think about this. The thing that bothers me about this election, I listen to the Republican debate, you know, and I think all four of the candidates that are left in this race crossed the real threshold, the first threshold, which is could you look at these people and imagine them being President? The answer to that is yes. I mean, these are people with some achievement and some real seriousness, and they lived lives that are worthy, nearly as I can tell, you know, even the ones that say bad things about me because they have to, to get votes on the other side. [*Laughter*] Okay, so they crossed the threshold. Then the whole issue is your employment decision here is based on what you think this election is about, because in theory, you could hire any of them.

And I'm telling you—the point I tried to make earlier tonight, I'll just leave you with this—is that I think this should be a time of urgency. I think it should be a time where the American people say the only way we can keep doing well is if we keep trying to do better, if we keep trying to expand the circle of opportunity, to deepen the meaning of freedom, to strengthen the bonds of our community. That's the only way we can keep doing well because the times are dynamic and because everyone who has lived any length of time knows that life can get away from you in a hurry.

And what I said that got the crowd's attention was that when we were celebrating this last month, in February, the fact that this is now the longest economic expansion in our Nation's history, I said, "Well, I want to go study the last longest expansion, you know, the one whose record we broke." And it was the 1960's, 1961 through 1969.

I graduated from high school in '64. President Kennedy had been killed; the country was heartbroken. We united behind President Johnson. There was enormous optimism. We were passing civil rights bills right and left in the Congress. The Vietnam war was not yet dividing our people, and everyone assumed that the economy would go on forever, high growth, low unemployment, low inflation. Everybody assumed we'd solve civil rights in the Congress and, of course, everybody assumed we'd prevail in the cold war without dividing the country.

A year later, Watts; 2 years later, demonstrations in every major city in the country. Four years later, I said, when I graduated from college, it was 2 days after Bobby Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection. Every city in the country was divided right down

the middle over the Vietnam war. Richard Nixon got elected, and a few months later, as the candidate of the Silent Majority, which meant those of us that weren't for him were in the loud minority. It was the first election between "us" and "them," a tactic that people have perfected since then, dividing the electorate between "us" and "them." No more "we" in American politics, you—"us" and "them." That was the salience of this whole Bob Jones University thing in the primaries. For those of us that are southerners, anyway, that went through that.

And what's happened? We've been living with that legacy ever since. And one of the reasons that I ran for President is I didn't like "us" and "them" politics. I didn't mind disagreeing with the Republicans, but I don't think I should have to demonize them, and I don't think I should ever shut my door to them. And if they've got a good idea, I don't think I ought to run away from it. And I believe we ought to build this country with anybody's new ideas, as long as you believe everybody counts, everybody should have a chance, everybody's got a role to play, we all do better when we help each other. That's what I think.

And the point I was trying to make today, I'll just make it to you—I want you to think about this tonight. I'm telling you in 1964 when I graduated from high school, we thought we were on automatic. We thought that sucker was going to fly. And it came apart. The wheels came off in no time. And every one of you, if you've lived long enough, can remember a personal incident in your life or your business life when the wheels came off because you thought everything was going so well, nothing bad could happen.

This is a time for vigilance, for devotion, for patriotism in the best sense. I've waited for 35 years for this, and I've worked hard for 7 years to give you the chance to finish building this bridge to tomorrow, building the future by dreams for our children. But just as a citizen, I think America got a second chance in my lifetime. That's what this election is about. That's why you want people like her in office, people that know it's a job; it's about ideas; it's about work; it's about people; it's about giving everybody a chance.

And if you define the election in the right way, with a sense of urgency, you will predetermine the winner. This election cycle—you mark my words, from President through all the congressional races down to every other one, the winner will be determined by how the employers—that's you, now—define the job.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner cohosts Sanford R. and Jeanne Robertson and Garen and Sheri Staglin; and Eric Schmidt, chief executive officer, Novell. The President also referred to California's proposition 26, School Facilities Local Majority Vote, which would permit a simple majority for school bond issues as opposed to the super majority currently required. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in San Francisco

March 3, 2000

I got up this morning—[*applause*]. Thank you. Thank you. I want to—you're looking here at a medical miracle. I got up this morning at 3 o'clock in the morning your time, and I'm still going. [*Laughter*] I'm glad to be back with Susie and Mark, and I'm glad to be here with all of you.

The major thing I would like to do tonight is have a chance to visit with you, so I think I'll forgo the speech and come around and just visit, and we'll all talk about whatever you'd like to talk about.

And Mayor Rendell, thank you for being here. Let me say, I've had a great night tonight. I made two appearances for Senator Feinstein and the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, and we had very good crowds, and we talked a lot about what's going on in America today. So maybe we can have some visits about it, and I look forward to it. Thank you very much for coming.

And give us some more music. I love that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:29 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Susie Thompkins Buell and Mark Buell, reception

hosts; and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address
March 4, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to speak with you about the senseless and heartbreaking gun violence that has shaken our Nation once again.

Yesterday, the community of Mount Morris Township, Michigan, held memorial services for a beautiful little girl who was shot to death in her first-grade classroom on Tuesday. Kayla Rolland was only 6 years old. When she walked to school with her older brother and sister, her backpack looked almost as big as she was, but she loved to carry books and read. In the words of her grandmother, she was a bright light who lit up everything wherever she went.

The community of Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, was also devastated this week. On Wednesday, a gunman unloaded his fury and a .22 caliber revolver in a busy commercial center. Five men were killed or grievously wounded, including a young college student and a man who served his community as a priest for 23 years. These tragedies were not isolated events. From Littleton to Fort Worth, Paducah to Pearl, gun violence has stolen the lives of young and old alike. It has desecrated churches and classrooms and daycare centers. It's kept parents up at night and made schoolchildren afraid to get on the bus in the morning.

Every day, gunfire takes the lives of a dozen children in America. One University of New Hampshire survey showed that 60 percent of 15-year-olds said they could get hold of an unlocked gun. If you look just at the accidental gun deaths among children under 15, the rate in the United States is 9 times higher than in the other 25 industrial countries combined. This is intolerable, and we must act, because we can do something about it.

Last year, with a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Gore, the Senate passed a juvenile crime bill that would go a long way toward strengthening our gun laws, requiring child safety locks, banning large ammunition clips, and closing the gun show background check loophole.

The House passed a much weaker bill. And for the past 8 months, the leaders in Congress have simply failed to get together to complete a final bill for me to sign. I've called on congressional leaders to join me at the White House on Tuesday to break that logjam. In that meeting I'll insist that they get the job done. I want Congress to send me a final bill that closes the loophole that allows criminals to buy firearms at gun shows, bans the importation of high capacity ammunition clips, holds adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns, and requires child safety locks for all new handguns, the kind of locks that would have prevented a first grader from taking Kayla Rolland's life.

I'll also ask for support on three other vital measures: to develop smart guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them; to require that new handgun buyers first get a photo license showing they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course; and to hire 1,000 new gun prosecutors. Gun crime prosecutions already are up 16 percent since I took office, but we should do more.

In a country of 270 million people, no law can stop every act of gun violence. But we can't just throw up our hands as if gun safety laws don't make a difference. We all have a responsibility to do our part, parents, community leaders, members of the gun industry, and yes, Members of Congress, too.

When we passed the Brady bill, people argued it wouldn't make any difference because criminals don't buy guns at gun stores, they said. But it turned out a lot of them did. Brady background checks have now blocked gun purchases by 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers. And gun crime is down by more than 35 percent since 1993.

The only reason Congress hasn't already sent me a bill with comprehensive gun safety provisions is because of the pressure tactics and the threats of the NRA. In fact, the NRA now is launching a $20 million campaign to target and to defeat Members of Congress who support responsible gun safety laws. But

when first graders shoot first graders, it's time for Congress to be guided by their hearts and their heads, not by a fear or the pressure tactics of the NRA.

It's time for all of us to make our voices heard in the Halls of Congress. The very least we can do to honor the memory of little Kayla Rolland and all the other tragic victims of gun violence is to pass sensible gun safety legislation right now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:05 p.m. on March 3 in the Los Gatos Room at the Silicon Valley Conference Center at Novell Headquarters, San Jose, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Los Angeles, California

March 4, 2000

Thank you. Thank you, Neil. I want to begin by just telling you that from the moment I got out of the car, I realized that I was going to have a wonderful time this evening. I thank the Nazarians, the Farahniks, and the Kadishas, and all of you for being here.

Gray Davis was talking about this being the Governor's Mansion—when I walked in here and looked up at the spiral staircase, I said, "You know, I really do live in public housing, after all." [*Laughter*]

Seriously, let me say to all of you that I am profoundly honored to be here with you tonight because what our host said in his opening remarks about coming here from Iran with nothing and how well he has done, and all of you have done, is a testament to the power of faith and family and work. Thank you for having the rabbi here tonight. He even gave me a book to read tonight. [*Laughter*] I promised to read it as quickly as I can.

I ran for President because I felt that this country had the best system in the world if people were given the conditions and the tools in which their faith, their family, their work could flourish. And it has been a joy and an honor to serve. For whatever role I have played in our prosperity and our improving social progress and our role in peace around the world, I am very grateful. But I want you to think tonight about, also, the role you can play. There is no such thing as a time to completely rest, maybe a day, a week, but not a long time. And a country becomes great by always trying to do better. Sometimes in small steps, sometimes in large steps.

I believe some very basic, simple things. You said that the President is not royalty yet. Most of the people in the national political press certainly agree with that statement. [*Laughter*] But I came from the heartland of America. I was the first person in my family ever to graduate from college. But I was taught to believe something as a child I still believe. And I look around here, and I see the living embodiment.

I believe every person counts, that everyone should have a chance, that everyone has a responsible role to play in life, and that we all do better when we help each other. I believe that freedom is the best system of government to allow the values that any of us have to flourish. And the fact that you can come here, preserve your community, and be a part of the larger American community is stunning evidence that that is right.

I regret that so many of you had to leave your native land, one of the most wonderful places in all of human history, one of the most important places, culturally, in all of human history. And I hope and pray that what we have seen in three elections now, there, means that there is a movement toward openness and freedom there, too, and that someday all of you will be able to go home to visit and have two homes, complete and open and free.

I have done my best to support that process in the limited way any American President can. I have also done my best to stand against the forces of religious and racial and ethnic and tribal hatred throughout the world, as you pointed out, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Africa to the Balkans. I have tried to protect the right of every person in this country and to advance the right of every person in every country

to practice their faith as they see fit. And I have found more than ever that usually, when you do the right thing, it turns out to be the practically beneficial thing.

And so, as I think about this moment, here we are on the eve of another set of elections, it seems like only yesterday I first took the oath of office. And this is the first election in almost 30 years that I have not been involved in as a candidate. And on most days, I'm all right. [*Laughter*] But tonight I speak to you not only as your President but as a citizen. I believe that our obligation in this election is to show that we are grateful for our prosperity, and we intend to do something with it. I believe our obligation in this election is to show that we are not arrogant about our progress, because we realize we'd have profound challenges here and around the world that we can still have an impact on, and we should shoulder those challenges and embrace them eagerly.

I believe that this election will be determined by what the people of this country decide the election is about. If they decide it's about who can offer the most immediate, short-term gratification, we'll be in trouble. If they decide that this has been a pretty good 7 years because we've continued to take the long view and we asked people to save a little so that we could get the country out of deficits, and now we're trying to get the country out of debt. And lo and behold, it turned out to be good social policy, because when interest rates dropped, more jobs were created and more poor people worked themselves into the middle class, and the welfare rolls were cut in half, and we were still able to double our investment in education. So that's what I am concerned about, as your President and as a citizen.

You came here, some of you came here directly from Iran after a terrible upheaval. You know, therefore, that you can never take life's blessings for granted. I don't want the American people to take life's blessings for granted. I want them to take this as an enormous opportunity to build a future of our dreams for all the children of this country. If we do that, we'll be just fine.

Tomorrow I'm going, at 5 o'clock in the morning, to Selma, Alabama, where, 35 years ago tomorrow, 600 brave Americans walked across a bridge for the right to vote. Some of them were killed for it. Many of them were brutalized for it. But because they walked across that bridge, this country is a better place.

What I want to say to you is, at the time that happened, most of you were not in this country then. Most of you in this room weren't even born then. But I was just a young boy. I believed that my President was doing a great thing to give every American the right to vote, something that had been too long denied. I believed that my Congress was doing a great thing to guarantee the civil rights of all Americans. And I believed that we were in an economic period of opportunity that would go on forever.

You may know that last month we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of America. I'm proud of that. The last longest economic expansion in the history of America was the decade of the 1960's, and because we were not careful, it got away from us. And instead of passing civil rights laws in Congress, we had riots in the streets. Instead of winning the cold war by the power of our example and our values and our strong defenses, the country was torn apart over the war in Vietnam. Instead of electing people that we admired, we saw Senator Kennedy and Martin Luther King killed just before I graduated from college.

I say that not to depress anyone but just to remind you of what you who are immigrants and who had to flee your country know: Opportunities in life are not to be taken for granted; good fortune is not to be taken for granted. We are never to believe that we deserve everything we have. Instead, we are to ask ourselves what is our responsibility, and the greater our good fortune, the greater our responsibility. It is not only true for families and communities, it is true for a country.

This country has never had the chance it now has to literally build the future of our dreams and to be a force for peace and freedom throughout the world. For all of you who have helped me to serve, I am very grateful. I worked as hard as I could to turn it around and to get things going in the right direction. And I'm not done yet. I get a little queasy when people start thanking me for

doing a good job. I feel as if I'm hearing a eulogy and I pinch myself—[*laughter*]—and I feel perfectly alive and still very much in harness. But you do have to think to the future. You are having elections. You are planning for the future.

The reason I like this Governor and the reason my wife, who wishes she could be here tonight, told me—when most people thought he had no chance to win, she said, "He'll win, because he's serious about the job, and he has thought more about what he would do if he got it." And Vice President Gore and I, we've worked hard to be serious about the job, to do things that would advance the values that we share.

And so I say to you, I thank you for your help. We'll do our best to invest your contributions wisely. But I hope you will continue to talk to your friends and neighbors. If somebody asks you tomorrow or the next day or the next day, why were you here tonight, don't say, father made me come. [*Laughter*] Tell them you came because you understand that this good fortune has to be nourished. You understand that it carries with it responsibilities, because you want every American to have the same chances that you have had, and because we all do better when we work together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:46 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gray Davis of California; reception cohosts Neil and Dora Kadisha, Pouran and Pariz Nazarian, and Leon and Debbie Farahnik.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Los Angeles

March 4, 2000

Thank you very much. I don't know about you, but I've been to one or two of these events in my life—[*laughter*]—and I had a wonderful time tonight. This is a marvelous restaurant. I've never been here before in all my years of traipsing around L.A. And I think we ought to give them a hand for making us feel so welcome.

I want to thank Mayor Rendell and our national finance chair, Joel Hyatt, for coming out here with me. I especially want to thank Chuck and Elizabeth and the Zimons, the Nathansons, all the others who have worked so hard. I want to thank all the people from the entertainment community who came. Kenneth and Tracy, thank you for being here. I want to thank especially Gregory and Veronique Peck for being here. And all the rest of you.

Mac Davis, thank you. I'm sure you remember this, but your show was on in Washington about the time I became President the first time. And in the last year of her life, my beloved mother got to go, and she thought you were the best thing since sliced bread. And I will always be grateful to you for the joy you gave to my mother when she was very ill, and I thank you for that.

And Olivia, I did my best not to sing along with you tonight. [*Laughter*] But when you started singing, I looked at Marc Nathanson; I said, "How many of her albums do you have? I mean, the old albums." [*Laughter*] I said, "I've still got that one where she comes up out of the water." [*Laughter*] And I still look at it every now and then. [*Laughter*]

So I want to thank you not only for your work as an artist, but especially because of my family's experience, I thank you for your continued fight against cancer, for children, and for being a role model for women all over this country by going on. Thank you very much.

And I don't know what to say about Governor Gray Davis, except I think we ought to maybe change his first name to "Red Hot" after tonight. [*Laughter*] You know, it's okay for you to get a little funny, but if you get any better, your shtick won't work anymore. [*Laughter*] That was a pretty good rap. But you're also—I might add—Hillary and I were talking about the California Governor's race when it started, and we knew his primary opponents and liked them. But I had known Gray for years and years.

And I said, "Hillary, what do you think is going to happen in that race?" She said, "Oh, I think Gray Davis will win." And I said, "Why?" She said, "Well, because he really wants to do the job, and he has a really good idea of what he would do if he got there, and that will communicate itself over the course of the campaign and build a lot of

confidence among the voters." And I think that pretty much says it, and I think the confidence of the voters has been well placed.

I'll try to make this fairly brief tonight, but I want you to think about why you came and what you'll say tomorrow if somebody asks you why you came. And I want to begin by telling you what I'm going to do tomorrow. About 4 o'clock tomorrow morning I'm going to get out of bed here in L.A., and at 5, I'm going to leave, and I'm going to fly to Selma. And I'm going to walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge at Selma on the 35th anniversary of the great march that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in America, with Congressman John Lewis, my friend and brother who was there 35 years ago.

And for me, as a southerner, it will be the experience of a lifetime to be able to go there as the President of my country, having lived through it as a young boy. I don't even have the words to say to you what it means to me. But I would like to remind you that people actually died to get the right to vote, in my lifetime. It's a big deal.

And so we're going to have this millennial election this year, at a great time of prosperity and progress. And if I have had any role in all of that, I am profoundly grateful for the chance I've had to serve. This will be the first election just about in over 25 years that I haven't been on the ballot somewhere. [*Laughter*] Most days I'm okay about it. [*Laughter*] But I care a great deal about how it comes out.

And I have learned something about this mystical process of democracy. This is basically America's greatest job interview. You're going to hire a President. You're going to hire Senators. You're going to hire Members of Congress. A few Governors will get hired. And what I have learned is that the difference in this job interview and a lot of things is that in every election, the bosses—the employers, you, the people—you've got to define what the job is. And the decision in terms of what the election is about will determine who wins, assuming all the candidates cross what I always thought of as the basic threshold.

And the four that are left, they cross that threshold. That is, if you look at them for a couple of minutes, can you imagine them being President? And if the answer to that is no, you can spend $500 million and campaign for 30 years, and you'll still never get there.

But half of them have to say bad things about me because that's what their party requires of them, but the truth is, they all pass that threshold. They are people that have lived good lives. They've accomplished things. They have things they can say they've done as public servants that they're proud of, and they have honest differences. So how this comes out depends on what you think the election is about.

And so I want to begin by saying, tomorrow morning, I want you to think about this tomorrow, and I want you to watch for it on the news. And I want you to see us all walking across that bridge and remember 35 years ago when people did it, they were risking their lives just to be able to vote. So you ought to do it, and you ought to take it seriously, and it matters what you think it's about.

Now, what I think it's about is, what are we going to do with this magic moment. I worked as hard as I could. You remember what it was like here in California in '91 when I showed up here. How in the world did I carry this State? I would have never had a chance to carry this—I was just the Governor, as President Bush used to affectionately refer to me, as the Governor of a small Southern State. And I rather enjoyed being the Governor of a small Southern State, and I learned a few things about human nature and basic economics that have stood me in pretty good stead. But I worked hard to help you turn this country around.

And so what do you think we ought to do? That's the most important thing. What I believe with all my heart is that we have this opportunity that is also a big responsibility. People—listen to the speeches these people are making in this election. They could have never even talked about this stuff 8 years ago. Why? Because we can now make the future of our dreams for our children. We can be a systematic, consistent force for good and decent things around the world, for freedom, for democracy, for liberating millions of people from disease in Africa and Asia and throughout the world. We can do things.

You know, what I think it's about is keeping the economy going. Gray talked about how I changed the way people thought about Democrats. I'm passionately committed to social justice, but the best social program is still a decent job and being able to support your family and letting poor people work their way into the middle class. And it matters.

So how can we keep the economy going? Should we pay the country out of debt for the first time since 1835? I think we should, because it keeps interest rates low, investment high, more businesses being started, and more people being hired, more wealth being spread more widely. I think we should.

Should we take this moment and for the first time maybe ever bring economic opportunity and enterprise to people in places that have been left behind? On the Indian reservations, the unemployment's as high as 70 percent. There are urban neighborhoods and rural areas in this country in the Mississippi Delta where I come from, or in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas where the unemployment rate is still 2, 3, 4 times the national average.

I want to give people like you the same incentives to invest there you have to invest in poor areas around the world, because if we can't bring those people economic opportunity now, we will never get around to it.

And I'm telling you, I grew up in a place like that. Intelligence is equally spread. There are people down there just as smart as anybody anywhere who can do anything anybody, anywhere, can do, and who are dying to have a chance to do it, and we need to bring economic opportunity to the places that have been left behind. That's what I think this election ought to be about.

For over 20 years now I have had a serious interest in education. And I can tell you that I now know something I didn't know over 20 years ago when I started. And when Hillary and I started going around to all the schools in our State, trying to figure out how to improve them, we didn't really know how to do it. We do now. I could take you to schools in the poorest, most dangerous neighborhoods in this country that are performing at a world-class level. We know how to do it.

But we have never figured out a way to systematically replicate educational excellence. One of the things that I promoted were these charter schools that California has been a leading proponent of. There was one when I became President. There are 2,000 today, and there are going to be 3,000—I hope—before I leave office, because that was my goal for the country.

The main thing I want to say to you is, it's one thing to talk about it, and another to do it. But you don't have to be skeptical anymore. We can turn around failing schools, and all kids can learn. You have to have high standards. You have to have accountability. I believe we should stop social promotion, but not until we can give every kid who needs it after-school programs, summer school programs, and mentoring programs to make sure they can succeed.

Chicago stopped it, but they didn't make the kids failures. Instead, they created a summer school that is now—listen to this—the 6th biggest school district in the United States of America—the summer school of Chicago. Needless to say, as a peripheral benefit, the juvenile crime rate dropped like a rock because people were doing positive things.

I think everybody that wants to go to college ought to be able to go and stay 4 years. We gave a tax credit called the HOPE scholarship that allows basically 2 years of community college to be made available universally in America. Now I want to allow tuition to be tax deductible. And if I don't pass it, the next President ought to, because we ought to make it possible for people to go 4 years. You've got to decide whether you think that's what this election is about.

We have a remarkable opportunity to help families balance their responsibilities to their children and at work. Equal pay for women, increase in the minimum wage, more child care, doing something to lift all of our children out of poverty—I think that's what this election is all about.

I think we can grow the economy and improve the environment for the first time in history. The digital economy means you can get rich without burning up the air. And we now have cleaner air, cleaner water. We've set aside more land than any administration

in history, except those of the two Roosevelts, in the continental United States. And the economy keeps getting better. And yet, some people in Washington think my crusade against climate change is some dark conspiracy to wreck the American economy. You have to decide. I think you ought to vote for somebody who is a committed environmentalist who also believes you can grow the economy. I think it's a big issue. You have to decide that.

These are just some of the issues that I think are important. But you have to decide what you think. I think it's a good thing that America has been a force for peace from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Kosovo to Bosnia to the tribal wars in Africa. So I disagree, respectfully, with one of the Republican candidates who said we had a feckless foreign policy. I think when we sent a million people home who were run out of their homes just because they were Muslims in Kosovo, without losing a single American soldier in combat, that was not feckless. That was a moral, good, decent thing to do. But you have to decide whether you agree with it. You've got to decide.

And you know, I do think a lot of my Vice President. And I didn't come here to make a campaign speech, and the nominating process is not over, but you have to decide whether you believe this is a job. One of the reasons I wanted to go to Washington is that I thought Washington had become turned in on itself. I thought it was dominated by talk show mentality instead of a show-up-for-work mentality.

I did an event for Senator Feinstein last night, and I said, "You know, even when Dianne gets mad at me, I like her because she has this idea, this crazy idea that being in the Senate is a job—[*laughter*]—and that she's supposed to show up for work and say, 'Here's what I intend to do,' and then she goes out and does it." So as a first term Senator, she passes the California Desert Protection Act, the assault weapons ban, and then we saved the redwoods. Why?

I'll tell you why, because she was more worried about passing those bills than her 15 seconds on the evening news or who was up or who was down or who was in or who was out. You realize that you can actually go crazy on your own initiative now. You can watch talk shows 24 hours a day, and you won't ever learn anything because to get on one you've got to take one position, and you can't ever say you might be wrong, and you can't ever change your mind. And you've got to be talking real loud by the time the other person's making a good point so no one can hear it. [*Laughter*]

Now, this is true. Now, you watch these things. Now, if you ran your business that way, if you made movies that way, if you made records that way, if you ran your home that way, everybody would be bankrupt, the divorce rate would be 100 percent, and every kid would be a school dropout. I mean, I wanted to change that.

So you've got to decide whether—you know, Gray makes fun about this charisma quotient business—I think it's pretty charismatic when children learn more. Children are going to learn more because of what he did in the California Legislature. That gets my blood going.

You know—but you have to decide this. I just want to leave you with this thought, because people are going to ask you, "Why did you come here?" And I'm thinking about it because of tomorrow. But in February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of the country and the only one of anything like this duration with no war. And I was profoundly proud of that. But I was feeling sort of reflective, so I did a little research into the last longest economic expansion, the one whose record we broke. And some of you in this audience, you're old enough to remember it. It was 1961 to 1969. Now, I want to tell you something about that expansion, how it came to end, and what happened. And I want you to think about it in terms of your responsibility in this election.

I graduated from high school in 1964. My President, John Kennedy, had been murdered. But our country rallied around President Johnson. He was overwhelmingly reelected; we passed a civil rights law; the next year we passed the Voting Rights Act. And when I finished high school, we were all happy as clams. We thought the following things were true: We thought this economy would go on forever, low unemployment, low inflation, and high growth; we thought we

would win the cold war just in the ordinary course of things; and we thought we would solve our civil rights problems in the Congress and the courts, and we would become a just and decent society in the course of things.

So I finished high school. It wasn't too long that we had riots in Watts. It wasn't too long after that we had demonstrations in every city in America against the Vietnam war. By the time I graduated from college on June 8th, 1968, it was—the Republicans got hold of the mike. [*Laughter*] Listen to this. I want you to listen to this. I graduated from college. In '64, everybody thought things were just going to be on automatic.

In 1968, I graduated from college; 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed; 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed; 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson, who won with the biggest majority in modern history, couldn't run for reelection. The country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war, and we had an election for President that was determined on a slogan called the Silent Majority. Do you remember that? And if you weren't in the Silent Majority, you were in the loud minority. That was me. [*Laughter*] And there was something wrong with the loud minority. It was like "us" and "them." And we've been having those "us" and "them" elections ever since. We've been "using" and "them-ing" ourselves to death.

And I tried to end that. But I haven't entirely succeeded, not when these Jewish kids get shot going to their school in Los Angeles just because they're Jewish, or Matthew Shepard gets stretched out on a rack and killed just because he's gay, or James Byrd gets dragged to death in Texas because he's black, or a white supremacist in the middle of the country kills a Korean Christian coming out of a church, and the black former basketball coach at Northwestern, and he says he belongs to a church that doesn't believe in God but does believe in white supremacy. We haven't gotten rid of all that.

What I want to tell you is, I say this as a person, not a President. I have waited for 35 long years for my country to be in a place to build the future of our dreams again. And it's easier for us now, because we don't have the civil rights crisis at home. It's easier for us now because the cold war is behind us now. It's easier for us now because we're a nation of many, many nations growing more diverse every day, with California leading the way.

But the stakes are still very high. And we should be humbled, as well as happy, by this good fortune. And we should feel responsible, not entitled, as a result of this prosperity. I'm telling you, I lived through it before. It can go away in the flash of a moment. We should cherish this. And you should understand—and I want you to think about it tomorrow when they walk in Selma. People died for the right to vote. You've got to go vote. You've got to go get your friends to participate. But you've got to make the right decisions about what is this about.

And I'm telling you, we've got a second chance as a country in my lifetime. Most of us have gotten second chances as people. Most of us are darn grateful for it. That's the way we ought to feel as citizens. And if we do, everything will turn out just fine.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 p.m. at the Cafe des Artistes. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Chuck and Elizabeth Meyer and Richard and Daphna Zimon, dinner hosts; Marc Nathanson, chair, Mapleton Investment Corp., and his wife, Jane; singer Kenneth Edmonds, popularly known as Babyface, and his wife, Tracey; actor Gregory Peck and his wife, Veronique; singers Mac Davis and Olivia Newton John; and Gov. Gray Davis of California. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the 35th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights March in Selma, Alabama

March 5, 2000

Thank you. This is a day the Lord has made for this very purpose. Congressman Lewis, Mrs. King, Reverend Jackson, Reverend Harris, Congressman Houghton, and Congressman Hilliard, and all the Members of the Congress who are here. I thank all the members of my administration who are here, especially Harris Wofford, the head of our AmeriCorps program who was here with

you 35 years ago today. I thank young Antar Breaux. Didn't he give a fine speech? When he was speaking, John leaned over to me and he said, "You know, I used to give a speech like that when I was young." [*Laughter*]

I thank Senator Sanders and Rose Sanders for the work they are doing with this magnificent Voting Rights Museum. I thank Joe Lowrey and Andy Young and Julian Bond and all the others who have come here to be with us. And I thank you, Hosea Williams and Mrs. Boynton and Mrs. Foster and Mrs. Brown and Mr. Doyle and Reverend Hunter, all the heroes of the movement from that day, those here on this platform and those in the audience.

I bring you greetings from three of my partners, the First Lady, Hillary, and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, who wish they could be here today. I thank Ambassador Sisulu for joining us. I thank Governor Siegelman for making us feel welcome. And I thank Mayor Smitherman for the long road he, too, has traveled in these last 35 years.

Now, let me say to you a few things. I come today as your President and also as a child of the South. The only thing that John Lewis said I disagree with is that I could have chosen not to come. That is not true. I had to be here in Selma today.

Thirty-five years ago, a single day in Selma became a seminal moment in the history of our country. On this bridge, America's long march to freedom met a roadblock of violent resistance. But the marchers, thank God, would not take a detour on the road to freedom.

By 1965, their will had already been steeled by triumph and tragedy, by the breaking of the color line at Ole Miss, the historic March on Washington, the assassinations of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and President Kennedy, the bombing deaths of four little black girls at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

On this Bloody Sunday, about 600 foot soldiers, some of whom, thankfully, remain with us today, absorbed with uncommon dignity the unbridled force of racism, putting their lives on the line for that most basic American right: the simple right to vote, a right which already had been long guaranteed and long denied.

Here in Dallas County, there were no black elected officials because only one percent of voting-age blacks, about 250 people, were registered. They were kept from the polls, not by their own indifference or alienation but by systematic exclusion, by the poll tax, by intimidation, by literacy testing that even the testers, themselves, could not pass. And they were kept away from the polls by violence.

It must be hard for the young people in this audience to believe, but just 35 years ago, Americans, both black and white, lost their lives in the voting rights crusade. Some died in Selma and Marion. One of the reasons I came here today is to say to the families and those who remember—Jimmy Lee Jackson, Reverend James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo, and others whose names we may never know—we honor them for the patriots they were.

They did not die in vain. Just one week after Bloody Sunday, President Johnson spoke to the Nation in stirring words. He said, "At times, history and fate meet in a single time and a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama. Their cause must be our cause."

Two weeks after Bloody Sunday, emboldened by their faith in God and the support of a white southerner in the Oval Office, Dr. King led 4,000 people across the Pettus Bridge on the 54-mile trek to Montgomery. And 6 months later, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, proclaiming that the vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men. It has been said that the Voting Rights Act was signed in ink in Washington, but it first was signed in blood in Selma.

Those who walked by faith across this bridge led us all to a better tomorrow. In 1964, there were only 300 black elected officials nationwide and just 3 African-Americans in the Congress. Today, those numbers

have swelled to nearly 9,000 black elected officials and 39 members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Today, African-Americans hold the majority in the Selma City Council and school board, because the number of African-American registered voters in Dallas County has risen from 250 to more than 20,000.

There's another point I want to make today. Just as Dr. King predicted, the rise of black southerners to full citizenship also lifted their white neighbors. "It is history's wry paradox," he said, "that when Negroes win their struggle to be free, those who have held them down will themselves be free for the first time."

After Selma, free white and black southerners crossed the bridge to the new South, leaving hatred and isolation on the far side—building vibrant cities, thriving economies, and great universities. A new South still enriched by the old-time religion and rhythms and rituals we all love, now open to all things modern and people of all races and faiths from all over the world. A new South in which whites have gained at least as much as blacks from the march to freedom. Without Selma, Atlanta would never have had the Super Bowl or the Olympics. And without Selma, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton would never have been elected President of the United States.

The advance of freedom and opportunity has taken our entire Nation a mighty long way. We begin the new millennium with great prosperity and the lowest levels of African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, with greater diversity in all walks of life and a cherished role in helping those beyond our borders to overcome their own racial and ethnic and tribal and religious conflicts. We have built the bridge to the 21st century we can all walk across.

We come here today to say, we could not have done it if brave Americans had not first walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Yes, we have come a mighty long way. But our journey is not over, for despite our unprecedented prosperity and real social progress, there are still wide and disturbing disparities that fall along the color line in health and income, in educational achievement and perceptions of justice. My fellow Americans, there are still bridges yet to cross.

As long as there are people in places, including neighborhoods here in Selma, that have not participated in our economic prosperity, we have a bridge to cross. As long as African-American income hovers at nearly half that of whites, we have another bridge to cross. As long as African-American and Hispanic children are more likely than white children to live in poverty and less likely to attend or graduate from college, we have another bridge to cross. As long as African-Americans and other minorities suffer 2, 3, even 4 times the rates of heart disease, AIDS, diabetes, and cancer, we have another bridge to cross.

As long as our children continue to die as the victims of mindless violence, we have another bridge to cross. As long as African-Americans and Latinos anywhere in America believe they are unfairly targeted by police because of the color of their skin, and police believe they are unfairly judged by their communities because of the color of their uniforms, we have another bridge to cross.

As long as the waving symbol of one American's pride is the shameful symbol of another American's pain, we have another bridge to cross. As long as the power of America's growing diversity remains diminished by discrimination and stained by acts of violence against people just because they're black or Hispanic or Asian or gay or Jewish or Muslim—as long as that happens to any American, we have another bridge to cross. And as long as less than half our eligible voters exercise the right that so many here in Selma marched and died for, we've got a very large bridge to cross.

But the bridges are there to be crossed. They stand on the strong foundations of our Constitution. They were built by our forebears through silent tears and weary years. They are waiting to take us to higher ground.

Oh, yes, the bridges are built. We can see them clearly. But to get to the other side, we, too, will have to march. I ask you to remember Dr. King's words: "Human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God."

My fellow Americans, this day has a special meaning for me, for I, too, am a son of the South, the old, segregated South. And those of you who marched 35 years ago set me free, too, on Bloody Sunday, free to know you, to work with you, to love you, to raise my child to celebrate our differences and hallow our common humanity.

I thank you all for what you did here. Thank you, Andy and Jesse and Joe, for the lives you have lived since. Thank you, Coretta, for giving up your beloved husband and the blessings of a normal life. Thank you, Ethel Kennedy, for giving up your beloved husband and the blessings of a normal life.

And thank you, John Lewis, for the beatings you took and the heart you kept wide open. Thank you for walking with the wind, hand in hand with your brothers and sisters, to hold America's trembling house down. Thank you for your vision of the beloved community, an America at peace with itself.

I tell you all, as long as Americans are willing to hold hands, we can walk with any wind; we can cross any bridge. Deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. In his remarks, he referred to Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; Rev. Jerome Harris, who gave the invocation; Antar Breaux, member, 21st Youth Leadership Movement, who introduced the President; Rose Sanders, president, National Voting Rights Museum, and wife of State Senator Henry (Hank) Sanders; Joseph Lowrey, former president, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young; Julian Bond, chair, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; South African Ambassador to the U.S. Sheila Sisulu; Gov. Don Siegelman of Alabama; Mayor Joe T. Smitherman of Selma, AL; Ethel Kennedy, widow of Senator Robert F. Kennedy; and the following participants of the 1965 voting rights march: Hosea Williams, Amelia Boynton Robinson, Marie Foster, Lillie Brown, Earnest Doyle, and Rev. J.D. Hunter.

Statement on Legislation To Award the Congressional Gold Medal to John Cardinal O'Connor

March 5, 2000

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor bestowed by the U.S. Congress. Today I am proud to sign legislation ratifying the decision of the Congress to present this award—the first Gold Medal of the new millennium—to His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor.

For more than 50 years, Cardinal O'Connor has served the Catholic Church and our Nation with constancy and commitment. From his early days performing parish work in his native Philadelphia, to his long service as a military chaplain in places like Korea and Vietnam, to his 16 years leading the Archdiocese of New York, Cardinal O'Connor's journey of faith has been America's blessing.

Whether it was the soldier on the battlefield or the patient battling AIDS, Cardinal O'Connor has ministered with a gentle spirit and a loving heart. Through it all, he has stood strong as an advocate for the poor, a champion for workers, and an inspiration for millions. He has worked tirelessly to bridge divides between those of different backgrounds and faiths, reminding us that the most important thing we share is our common humanity.

Cardinal O'Connor has always had the courage to speak his mind and act on the firmness of his convictions. In recent months, we have seen his courage on display once more in the face of illness. Today, as our Nation salutes Cardinal O'Connor, we thank him for dedicating his life to lifting the lives of others.

Statement on the Sale of F–16 Aircraft to the United Arab Emirates

March 5, 2000

I welcome the news that the negotiation for the sale of F–16 aircraft to the United

Arab Emirates has been successfully concluded and that the agreement has been signed. Completion of this sale is another significant step in the strategic relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates and reflects the importance we attach to strengthen the defensive capability of one of our most important friends in the Gulf. This sale is also important for the viability of our defense industrial base and will benefit American workers. I want to personally thank President bin Zayid for his commitment to making this aircraft sale a reality.

Memorandum on Delegation of Authority To Transmit Report on Cooperative Projects With Russia

March 3, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Delegation of Authority to Transmit Report on Cooperative Projects With Russia

By authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, I hereby delegate to the Secretary of Defense the duties and responsibilities vested in the President by section 2705(d) of Division G of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105–277; 112 Stat. 2681–844). Such duties and responsibilities shall be exercised subject to the concurrence of the Secretary of State.

The reporting requirements delegated by this memorandum to the Secretary of Defense may be redelegated not lower than the Under Secretary level. The Department of Defense shall obtain clearance on the report from the Office of Management and Budget prior to its submission to the Congress.

Any reference in this memorandum to the provisions of any Act shall be deemed to be referenced to such Act or its provisions as may be amended from time to time.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register.*

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 6.

Statement on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty

March 6, 2000

Thirty years ago—March 5, 1970—the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force. The countries that negotiated the NPT had clear and important goals. They wanted a safer, more secure world in which states not possessing nuclear weapons would foreswear their acquisition, and in which states with nuclear weapons would work toward eliminating them. They wanted an effective verification system to confirm these commitments. And they wanted to ensure that countries could use the atom peacefully to improve the lives of their people without spurring nuclear weapons proliferation.

On that day in 1970, 43 countries committed themselves to the vision of the NPT. Today, there are 187 parties. Over the past 30 years, the NPT has served as an increasingly important barrier to the spread of nuclear weapons. The United States remains committed to achieving universal adherence to the NPT and will continue working to bring all remaining countries into the treaty.

The strength and effectiveness of the NPT today are a legacy of countless individuals who crafted and promoted this irreplaceable treaty. I am proud that during my administration the parties to the NPT made a major contribution to lasting peace and security by agreeing in 1995 to make the treaty permanent.

Adherence to the NPT, together with inspections called for in the treaty by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), provide assurance to countries that their neighbors' nuclear programs are peaceful. The United States strongly supports the IAEA and calls on other NPT parties to work with us in strengthening the IAEA's ability to ensure compliance with the treaty.

Such compliance allows countries with nuclear technology to share the many peaceful benefits of the atom, reducing the risk that this cooperation will not result in weapons activities. Improved human health, increased food production, and adequate supplies of clean water are only a few of the many ways

in which nuclear techniques contribute to a better world.

The NPT also calls for parties to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament." Remarkable progress in nuclear disarmament has occurred since the end of the cold war. Under the START process, the United States and Russia have committed to reduce deployed strategic nuclear warheads by approximately two-thirds from cold war levels. We have agreed to a START III framework that would cut these arsenals by 80 percent from those peaks, and we will intensify our efforts to work with Russia to bring this agreement into effect. Already, the United States has eliminated some 59 percent of our overall nuclear weapons, and many U.S. facilities once dedicated to the production of nuclear weapons have been shut down, deactivated, or converted to other uses. Our nuclear weapons are no longer targeted against any country; our Army, Marine Corps, and surface and air Navy no longer deploy nuclear weapons; and our bomber force no longer stands on alert.

NATO has reduced the number of nuclear warheads dedicated to its sub-strategic forces in Europe by 85 percent, and NATO's dual capable aircraft, the Alliance's only nuclear forces, are no longer maintained on alert status, and their readiness levels have been reduced from minutes to weeks.

The United States and Russia are cooperating to ensure no further production of weapons-usable material, the safe storage of existing quantities of such material, and internationally supervised elimination of surplus stocks of nuclear materials.

We will continue the U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing and work to establish a universal ban through the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Conference on Disarmament should take the next essential step for global nuclear disarmament by negotiating a fissile material cutoff treaty now, without conditions.

The United States is committed to the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons. Achieving this goal will be neither easy nor rapid. Accordingly, the United States rededicates itself to work tirelessly and expeditiously to create conditions that will make possible even deeper reductions in nuclear weapons and, ultimately, their elimination.

Proclamation 7280—Save Your Vision Week, 2000

March 6, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Sight is a precious gift that enables us to experience the wonder of the world around us; but few of us think about what we would do if we lost our vision. Unfortunately, millions of Americans must face this challenge because of conditions like cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, or age-related macular degeneration.

Our most powerful tool in the battle against vision loss is early detection. A dilated eye examination can reveal signs of many eye diseases and disorders long before a patient experiences pain or any other noticeable symptom. Through early intervention and treatment, the vision loss accompanying such diseases can be reduced, postponed, or even prevented. Protective eyewear can also play a vital role in saving vision, particularly for individuals who use chemicals or operate machinery.

There is hope as well for people who suffer from low vision. Affecting 1 in 20 Americans, low vision is an impairment that cannot be corrected by standard glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery, and interferes with one's ability to participate in everyday activities. While it can occur in people of all ages and backgrounds, low vision primarily affects the growing population of people over 65 years old; other higher risk populations, including Hispanic and African Americans, are more likely to develop low vision at an earlier age.

While vision loss usually cannot be restored, vision rehabilitation techniques and products can make daily life much easier for people with low vision. From improved lighting in stairways and closets to talking clocks and computers to large-print labels on appliances, there are numerous products and services that can help people with low vision

maintain their confidence and independence, and improve their overall quality of life.

Every day, physicians and researchers make progress in the search for better treatments—and ultimately a cure—for vision loss. In this new century, emerging technologies will improve upon existing visual devices and techniques, and new medications will ensure more effective treatment of eye diseases and disorders. By investing in research and technology and committing to regular comprehensive eye examinations, we can ensure a brighter, healthier future for ourselves and our children.

To remind Americans of the importance of safeguarding their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 138), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 5 through March 11, 2000, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives and to ensure that dilated eye examinations are included in their regular health maintenance programs. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations dedicated to preserving eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of the measures we can take to protect and sustain our vision.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 8, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 9.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

March 7, 2000

Gun Control Legislation

The President. Good afternoon. Given what I want to talk about today, it seems fitting that I am speaking to you in the briefing room we have just named for Jim Brady.

Last spring, the brutal shootings at Columbine gave a life and death urgency to the call for strengthening our Nation's gun laws. The Senate responded to that call, in spite of fierce pressures by the gun lobby. With a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President, the Senate passed an amendment to close the gun show loophole and pass other commonsense provisions that require child safety locks and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips.

Unfortunately, the House narrowly defeated the McCarthy amendment to close the gun show loophole and passed a much weaker bill than the Senate did. Now, for the past 8 months, the leaders in Congress have done virtually nothing to complete a final bill.

That's why I called upon Senators Hatch and Leahy and Representatives Hyde and Conyers to come to the White House this morning. I met with them in the Oval Office for nearly an hour. We had a very good discussion. My message was simple: Congress has kept the American people waiting long enough. I want Congress to finish the gun bill and send it to me by the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy, April 20th.

In the meeting this morning, I told the leaders the final bill needs to close the loophole that allows criminals to buy firearms at gun shows, without opening any new loopholes in the process.

I said I wanted a ban on the importation of ammunition clips that allow shooters, including those in Littleton, to spray bullets across a wide killing zone in a matter of seconds. And I said a final bill needs to require child safety locks and should hold adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns, two measures

that are particularly relevant in light of the heartbreaking shooting of Kayla Rolland last week.

I know the gun lobby is cranking up pressure on Congress again. But when first graders shoot first graders, it's time for Congress to do what's right for America's families.

All four Members of Congress I met with this morning expressed their desire to work with us in good faith. I'm grateful for their willingness to meet with me today and to continue working together. But let's be clear here: 8 months is long enough. There's no more time for delay. The conference committee should meet and work out their differences and send me a good bill. We owe it to our children and to the victims to get this done by April the 20th.

When I talk to the parents of victims, they just can't understand why people in Washington are always talking about what we can't do instead of what we can do. I'm not interested in talking about how little we can do. I'm interested in how much we can accomplish to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, did you get any kind of commitment from the leaders——

Q. Mr. President, if Congress——

The President. I'll take both of them.

Q. If the congressional leaders and the gun lobby were not swayed after the Columbine shooting, what makes you feel that the time is, so to speak, more right now?

The President. Well, how many more people have to get killed before we do something? I mean, we had a pretty rough week last week.

And let me say, one of the things that I did in preparation for this—because, as you know, before last week we were pushing to try to get a conference on the juvenile justice bill—I actually read the proposal made by Mr. Hyde on this subject and the counterproposal made by Mr. Conyers. And the Conyers proposal, I think, is workable, and would keep—would go a very long way toward, in fact, closing the gun show loophole. The Hyde proposal is a substantial movement away from just the total, what you might call the complete NRA position.

So I think that if we could get a conference meeting and they could start working on the things everybody agrees on and get these two leaders to work through this and give us a provision that would actually work—there's more than one way to do this; we need something that will actually work—I think that it's quite possible that that could occur.

Keep in mind, there's a reason that there's such an effort to keep this conference from meeting. I think they know now that if a bill came out that had a reasonable gun show provision, loophole provision, in it that actually closes the loophole, that it would pass the House and the Senate because the American people want it.

So we can't pretend that it's not the same as defeating the bill just to never have the conference meet. The conference needs to meet. And what I believe will happen is that you will have more talking and more thinking and less shouting if the conference committee will meet. That's what Congress hires on to do, to write laws. And I think it's very important that this be done. And I hope that the conference committee will meet soon. And I believe that there's a way to work through this that will satisfy some of the practical concerns that people who are interested in the gun shows have, and still allow us to have an airtight guarantee that we're going to keep the guns away from the criminals and the other categories of people covered by the Brady law.

Yes, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]?

Q. Mr. President, did you get any commitment from the Republicans today that they would actually have a meeting, that there would be a conference? And would you be willing to accept any bill that did not include the gun show background check?

The President. First of all, where we left it was that—I think that Leahy, Conyers, and Hyde, I believe, were willing to start the conference. I believe that. I don't want to speak for Mr. Hyde, but I think that's accurate. I believe that—Senator Hatch said that he thought he had to go back and consult with the Republican leadership and the members of the caucus, and he would try to give us an answer in the next little bit here.

I think that Senator—I mean, Mr. Conyers said he would work with Mr. Hyde to try to work out the gun show issue, but he didn't want to do that as a way of putting off the conference, and I agree with that. He said he thought we ought to have a conference. The conference ought to approve everything else, including the child trigger locks, the ammunition clip ban, which is a big issue in view of some of the other things that have happened here lately, and these other issues, and that, meanwhile, he would work with Mr. Hyde to try to work through this.

Now, all I can tell you is, I think it would be a big mistake for Congress not to close the gun show loophole. Keep in mind—lets everybody remember this—one of the principal arguments used against the Brady bill, when we passed that and I signed it, was that criminals don't buy guns at gun stores; they buy guns at gun shows. You go back and look at the debate. And one of the things they said, "Oh, the criminals don't buy—they either get them on one-on-one sales, or they get them at these gun shows or urban flea markets."

Well, it turned out that was wrong. We've had almost a half-million gun sales not approved through gun stores. But the same people who were telling us 7 years ago, or 6 and 7 years ago, that we didn't need the Brady bill, because all the criminals were buying their guns at gun shows, now tell us we can't stop the criminals from buying guns at gun shows. I mean, I think it's very important to understand, there are people's lives at stake here. This will save lives.

Now, people that are very solicitous and understanding of all the sort of practical problems for these rural gun shows—I'm telling you, there are ways to work through that. I've actually been to these rural gun shows. I know what they look like. I understand what these people are saying. I'd been to them when I was Governor, I know—you have something off in a field in the country, and you've got all the pickups and the cars opened up, and two or three thousand people come through in a day. I understand that. We have the technology to do the background checks, and we can do it, and we can do it without shutting these things down and all the law-abiding people that are involved in them down.

But if we act like because there are practical problems, we're just not going to save these people's lives, and we're going to let all these criminals buy guns, I think that is, to me, it's unconscionable to walk away from that.

Q. When you meet with the mother of the Michigan child this afternoon, do you think that you can reasonably assure her that there will be a bill this year? And secondly, can you make that kind of commitment knowing that there are as many Democrats as Republicans needed still to get support for something like this?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think that is true. I think that if—among the Democrats that voted for Mr. Dingell's bill, I think if some practical changes were made in the law which would not undermine that ability of the checks to actually keep guns out of hands of criminals, felons, fugitives, and stalkers, I think that most of the Democrats would vote for that bill. And I think a lot of Republicans would, and I believe it would pass. So that's what I believe would happen.

Now, what I'm going to tell her when I see her, first of all, is that as a parent my heart goes out to her, and as President I'm going to do everything I can to see that it doesn't happen to other children. That's all I can do.

I can't—do I know whether the Republicans will permit a bill to pass this year or whether they will be willing to stand up to the NRA? No, I don't know that. But I think that if we could get a bill out of that committee that was a good bill, this year, I think it would pass. And I think that may be what is going on now. That may be why there's so much pressure on Senator Hatch not to call a meeting.

But that is no way to do it. They ought to vote, vote up or down, declare themselves. If they don't want this bill to pass, they shouldn't be ashamed to tell America they don't want it to pass. And if they do, they ought to get together and pass it.

President's Upcoming Visit to South Asia

Q. Mr. President, regarding your trip to India, there are now reports that you will make a brief stop in Pakistan. Are those reports true?

The President. I should have an announcement on that probably within a day. I'm working that, and we're about to finalize the arrangements, and as quickly as I know—as I can do so, when I finish the calls I'm making, I'll be glad to release that.

Colombia

Q. Mr. President, aid to Colombia is facing problems in the Congress of the United States. There are some people who doubt—they think it might be another Vietnam. Some people think that the military aid will end up in violation of human rights and talks of collusion between the military and paramilitary forces. What are you doing to try to get this aid passed that Colombia has been waiting for a long time and you've been pushing for a long time?

The President. Well, I still believe the package will pass. I think the questions which are being asked are legitimate questions and should be asked. I mean, if I were a Member of Congress and I just heard the administration were to give this amount of money to Colombia and it was generally going to be used to fight drugs and do some other things, I would ask the same questions.

But all I can tell you is that it's not like Vietnam in the sense that we are not making a commitment to train soldiers in a way that we will then be called upon to come in and replace them or fight with them or work with them. This is to deal with a guerrilla war, which is what happened in Vietnam.

In this case, we will be using some of the funds to train soldiers to support police officers who will be doing antinarcotics work. And the units that will be involved in this will have to be particularly vetted to make sure that they don't have the pattern of abuse that you referred to.

So we have worked as hard as we could to do this. Now, can I tell you that there will never be a dollar of this that would be spent in a way that I wouldn't want? Nobody can say that. But I can say this: I think that we're a lot better off trying to help stabilize Colombia and save democracy there and help them fight narcotics there and keep more drugs out of this country, than if we walk away from it. I think the consequences, if we walk away, are pretty clear. And if we help them, we just might make it and turn the situation around. That's what I think we ought to try to do.

Mary [Mary McGrory, Washington Post].

Gun Control Legislation

Q. Mr. President, the argument is made that the bill under consideration, all the other bills would not have prevented either Columbine or what happened in Flint. Have you ever considered advocating abolition of handguns, as advocated by the late Senator John Chafee, who spoke of the insanely easy access to guns in this country?

The President. Well, I think, first of all, I'm not sure that's true. I just have a statement here by the young woman that bought the guns used at Columbine, and she said, "I wish it had been more difficult. I wouldn't have helped them buy the guns if I had faced a background check."

So, first of all, this works. And I also believe we should license handgun owners, and when they buy guns, I think they ought to have to pass a Brady background check and show they've taken a safety course. I think we should do more than we're doing. But I believe that it is best for me as President to focus on what we can get done to save lives.

John Chafee, as you know, was a wonderful man and an aberration in the present Republican Senate caucus. But I don't think there would be many votes for that in the Congress. And what I should be doing is trying to pass the strongest possible legislation I can pass to save the largest number of lives I can save.

I do believe, Mary, if we—one of the things that we ought to do if we can get this legislation on the books is to be much more aggressive in these gun buyback programs, as well, to try to reduce the total stock out there of the kind of loose guns that are running around. I mean, when you hear over 200 million guns are held in America, it's trembling—it's a staggering figure. But a lot of them are held by collectors and hunters

and others with big supplies who are responsible people. But if we had, I'm convinced, if we had a more aggressive use of gun buyback programs, we could draw down a lot of these guns that are used in crimes.

Yes sir.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Page one of the usually reliable Washington Post reports this morning that you regularly——

The President. Is that an editorial comment? [*Laughter*]

Q. ——you regularly advise the campaign of Vice President Gore. Did you advise Mr. Gore to allow no media questions for the past 17 days, particularly because of the Maria Hsia case, including Gore's appearance in Buffalo on Saturday, where I found that the gymnasium was one-third empty, Mr. President?

The President. No. [*Laughter*] No.

Q. Don't you think he ought to answer media questions like you do?

The President. Well, since I didn't advise him privately, I don't think I should advise him publicly. [*Laughter*] It looks to me like he's doing a pretty good job with his campaign. But I did not—I haven't talked to him about that at all.

Go ahead.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. Mr. President, back on guns for just a moment. You said what we need to do is pass the strongest legislation we can pass. The leaders who came out were not all that specific, other than to say that the gun show loophole was the main thing hanging this up. In your view, what has to be done to close that loophole? Is it three days? Is it 24 hours? Is it less than 24 hours? What in your view needs to be done to close it?

The President. Well, first of all, let's look at the facts here. The answer may be a combination of both. That is, if you have an Instacheck system—today, when we do the background checks, over 90 percent of them are completed within a day. Over 70 percent of them are completed within an hour, I think.

But you have to have some provision for dealing with the leakage. That is, suppose you're meeting over the weekend, and the records are not in the national crime database; suppose you're dealing with mental health records, for example, that would have, under the Brady bill, would disqualify someone from getting a handgun but aren't available; suppose you're dealing with records that are in a local police department that might not be in the database, where you have to make a phone call. So the answer is, if you had 24 hours, you'd get most people. But the thing is, the people you don't get—the people you don't get in that last 5 percent—listen to this—are 20 times more likely to be turned down than the population as a whole.

So what you need—I have no objection to some provision which would say, okay, everybody that clears, do the 24 hours, and let it roll. But you have to have some other provision there to deal with the 5 percent you can't—or however, whatever the percentage is; it's less than 10—whatever the percentage is you can't get done in 24 hours, because a significant percentage of the people that shouldn't be getting the guns are in that percentage.

So that's why I say, you guys would have—it would be great for you if they would actually have this conference and start debating this. And instead of debating the Senate provision or the Dingell bill, or the Senate provision or nothing, you could hear this debate between Conyers and Hyde, and we could get down to the facts. And it would be—you'd really have something to get your teeth into and talk about in terms of, what does it take to save lives?

My criteria is, does it work? You know, I don't mind being—like I said, I've been to these country gun shows. I know what they're like, and I understand what some of the practical questions raised are. But I'm just telling you, with a minimum of effort, we can save lives, and we can take care of all these cases that the Brady bill takes care of.

So I'm not giving you an evasive answer. I'm telling you, this is a fact question. But you don't want to just—the problem with the 24-hour thing is, you do over 90 percent of the checks, but of the ones that leak, they're 20 times more likely to be turned down. So,

therefore, I think we have to have some provision to deal with them.

Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, when do you plan to act on a request by Taiwan for new weapons systems? Do you think that granting such a request could help you with your China trade legislation on the Hill? And do you think the Taiwanese, perhaps, deserve the weapons given recent Chinese saber rattling in the area?

The President. I think my answer to the first question will answer the next two. I don't know because I have not sat down and looked at the facts. Any decision I make has to be made consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and with our general policy in the area. And I will do what I think the right thing to do is. But I literally have not had a meeting on it. We haven't discussed timing or anything. I have had no meetings.

Go ahead, April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks].

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, today is Super Tuesday, and it's the weeding-out process. What are your hopes for the candidates that are left standing? And since John McCain has been talking about George Bush's morals and ethics, have you been reminded of that cruel joke that he told about Chelsea a couple years ago, and what are your thoughts about that?

The President. He asked me to forgive him, and I did.

Q. Do you think that he makes an appropriate Presidential candidate——

The President. He asked me to forgive him, and I did. And since I have asked people to forgive me, I would be in a poor position if I refused the same thing. And I believe him to be a good man. And he asked me to forgive him, and I did.

And I think the—you know, what I think—I have a slightly different take on this than most people, I guess, but since I'm not a candidate, maybe you will believe me when I tell you, since I'm not running. When people fight with each other over issues that they disagree with and they advertise about it, I don't consider that necessarily negative campaigning. When people say to each other that they're somehow—that their opponents are morally inferior or that they're morally superior, that can be negative campaigning. It's also very hazardous.

You know, there are lots of verses in the Bible. One of them says that you've got be careful when you're standing not to brag about it; otherwise you might find yourself on your knees. I mean you know—but I think the fact that this has been a vigorous campaign fight over differences of opinion on campaign finance, the nature of a tax cut, what kind of education policy we should have in all these primaries, I think that's been good for the American people. And my only wish today is that there's a real big turnout. I just hope they all go out and vote, and I hope they'll continue to vote all the way to November.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thanks. Thank you.

Q. And your hopes for those who remain standing?

The President. What did you say?

Q. The hopes for those who remain standing after this weeding-out process?

The President. I think they ought to go before the American people and say this is the millennial election, and they ought to say what they say. You know who I'm for and what I hope happens in the election. But the main thing is, I want this election to be fought out over the issues. And if they fight over the issues and criticize each other over the issues, I don't consider that to be negative campaigning. That's debating. That's the way the system works.

I would like to see this election be given back to the American people. I'd like to see the fights over things that affect them and not over whether one candidate should have gotten more merit badges than another.

Oil Prices

Q. On gas prices, just one last quick question. There are predictions that it could go to $1.80.

The President. Yes.

Q. Today I paid $1.70 for a gallon of gas. Well, I can afford it. Many Americans can't. [*Laughter*] It's a serious thing for many people who are on tight budgets.

The President. First of all, let me say—I've told you this before, and as time goes on we'll have more to say about this. I've been working on this issue. I think what we want are stable oil prices that aren't too high, and I think that's what the oil producing countries should want. Because what's going to happen is, there will be all kinds of reactions—we have our options; others have theirs—but some countries will just have their economic growth slowed if you have oil prices that are too high.

And then what's going to happen? One of two things or both will happen. You will either have a big drop in demand for oil prices, which will drive the price back down just because people won't be buying as much anymore, and it will cut the revenues of the oil-producing countries below where they would have been if they have maintained stable prices at a lower level. Or you will have a lot of non-OPEC members who aren't subject to their agreement start increasing their production, taking market share away from them, and that will also cut oil prices and lower their revenues, because they'll have less market share.

Now, one of those two things is going to happen unless there's more equilibrium in this market. And I think everybody recognizes that they're too high. There's a reason they're too high now, because we're producing 73 million barrels a day and consuming 75 million. Therefore, the price is continuing to rise, because demand exceeds supply. And demand exceeds supply because of, in effect, artificial decisions made by the producers.

So this would be kind of like deregulation in America in telecom and a lot of other areas, once you get other producers. Either that or supply will drop because—I mean, excuse me—demand will drop because they won't be able to sustain the price. So I think, sure, I want oil prices to go down some. But the producing countries should want them to go down some, too.

Now, on the other hand, Americans should not want them to drop to $12 or $10 a barrel again, because that puts you in this roller coaster environment which is very destabilizing to the producing countries and not particularly good for our economy and takes our mind off our business, which should be alternative fuels, energy conservation, reducing the impact of all this on global warming.

But we need stable prices at a lower level, and that's what we're working for. And I hope that's what the producing countries will see is clearly in their best interests, because it is.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Presidential Press Secretary James S. Brady; Veronica McQueen, whose 6-year-old daughter, Kayla Rolland, was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI; and Robyn Anderson, who allegedly purchased several handguns that were used in the shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO, on April 20, 1999. A reporter referred to Maria Hsia, who was convicted of illegal campaign fundraising practices.

Statement on Senate Action on Judicial Nominations

March 7, 2000

I am pleased that the United States Senate, by a vote of 93 to 0, has confirmed Julio Fuentes to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Judge Fuentes, whom I nominated one year ago tomorrow, is a richly experienced State court judge from Newark, New Jersey. He will be the first Hispanic judge to serve on the Third Circuit.

Despite this positive step, however, the Senate still must act on the 38 judicial nominees currently awaiting hearings or floor votes. In particular, the Senate is poised to act this week on the nominations of Richard Paez and Marsha Berzon to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Paez, the first Mexican-American ever to serve as a Federal district court judge in Los Angeles, has awaited a vote for more than 4 years, longer than any judicial nominee in modern history. Berzon has been before the Senate for 2 years. Both are highly qualified individuals who will serve the courts and our country with distinction.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 7, 2000

Dear _____:

I am writing this letter to strongly encourage Congress to pass clean, straightforward legislation to raise the minimum wage by $1—from $5.15 to $6.15—in two equal steps. Working families across this country deserve an increase that simply restores the real value of the minimum wage to what it was in 1982.

Those who argue this modest pay raise would harm the economy could not be more wrong. Since 1996, when I worked with Congress to raise the minimum wage by 90 cents over 2 years, the unemployment rate has fallen from 5.2 percent to 4.1 percent—near the lowest level in 30 years, more than 10 million new jobs have been created, and economic growth has averaged 4.3 percent.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, some in Congress are insisting on a lengthier 3-year increase in the minimum wage—a delay that would cost a full-time, year-round worker more than $900 over 2 years. Others have chosen to use the minimum wage increase as a vehicle to repeal important overtime protections for American workers. And finally, some are using this minimum wage increase to pass irresponsible tax cuts that would threaten our fiscal discipline and jeopardize our ability to extend the life of Medicare and Social Security and pay down the debt by 2013.

Let me be clear—this is the wrong approach. I will veto any legislation that holds this minimum wage increase hostage to provisions that delay this overdue pay raise or jeopardize our ability to strengthen Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt by 2013 for future generations.

All Americans should be able to share in our current economic prosperity. For a full-time worker at the minimum wage, this increase would provide a $2,000 annual raise—enough for family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay rent for 5 months. More than 10 million workers would benefit from this proposal, the majority of them women. Congress should do the right thing and give these workers a raise.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

March 7, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95–384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you a report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period December 1, 1999, to January 31, 2000. The previous submission covered events during October and November 1999.

The United Nations convened 12 days of intensive talks to resolve the Cyprus dispute in early December. United Nations Secretary General Annan reported that both parties engaged seriously on the whole range of issues that divide them. My Special Envoy for Cyprus, Alfred H. Moses, and his team provided critical diplomatic support for the United Nations efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement.

Talks resumed in Geneva on January 31 where United Nations Special Advisor Alvaro de Soto held a series of meetings with both sides. The parties will continue discussions on May 23 in New York. We welcome this important process, and we will continue to work with the United Nations to reach a solution for all Cypriots based on a bizonal, bicommunal federation.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Executive Order 13147—White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy

March 7, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), and in order to establish the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Establishment.* There is established in the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy (Commission). The Commission shall be composed of not more than 15 members appointed by the President from knowledgeable representatives in health care practice and complementary and alternative medicine. The President shall designate a Chair from among the members of the Commission. The Secretary of Health and Human Services (Secretary) shall appoint an Executive Director for the Commission.

Sec. 2. *Functions.* The Commission shall provide a report, through the Secretary, to the President on legislative and administrative recommendations for assuring that public policy maximizes the benefits to Americans of complementary and alternative medicine. The recommendations shall address the following:

(a) the education and training of health care practitioners in complementary and alternative medicine;

(b) coordinated research to increase knowledge about complementary and alternative medicine practices and products;

(c) the provision to health care professionals of reliable and useful information about complementary and alternative medicine that can be made readily accessible and understandable to the general public; and

(d) guidance for appropriate access to and delivery of complementary and alternative medicine.

Sec. 3. *Administration.* (a) To the extent permitted by law, the heads of executive departments and agencies shall provide the Commission, upon request, with such information and assistance as it may require for the purpose of carrying out its functions.

(b) Each member of the Commission shall receive compensation at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate specified for Level 1V of the Executive Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5315) for each day during which the member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Commission. While away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of the duties of the Commission, members shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701–5707).

(c) The Department shall provide the Commission with funding and with administrative services, facilities, staff, and other support services necessary for the performance of the Assay Commission's functions.

(d) In accordance with guidelines issued by the Administrator of General Services, the Secretary shall perform the functions of the President under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), with respect to the Commission, except that of reporting to the Congress.

(e) The Commission shall terminate 2 years from the date of this order unless extended by the President prior to such date.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 7, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:57 a.m., March 9, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 8, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 10.

Memorandum on Dedicating Federal Housing Administration Revenues for Affordable Housing

March 7, 2000

Memorandum for the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Director, Office of Management and Budget, Director, Domestic Policy Council

Subject: Dedicating Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Revenues for Affordable Housing

One of the fundamental goals of my Administration has been to reinvent government, to make it serve the public better and restore public confidence in the institutions of government. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has met these goals well. HUD's 2020 Management Reform Plan has transformed HUD from top to bottom, and helped HUD improve performance even as it has reduced the number of its employees. The Department has twice been recognized by the Kennedy School of Government for innovation in government.

Nowhere is the turnaround at HUD more evident than in FHA. In the early 1990s, FHA was in near-bankruptcy. Today, FHA and its Mutual Mortgage Insurance (MMI) Fund are financially healthier than they have been in decades. On March 6, HUD released the results of an actuarial review showing that the total value of the Fund in Fiscal Year 1999 was more than $5 billion above the total value reported for Fiscal Year 1998. These improvements in the Fund are due not just to recent economic prosperity, but also to fundamental changes in FHA. The Office of Management and Budget will assess the actuarial review to determine its accuracy, its implications for the overall status of FHA finances, and its consistency with my Administration's economic assumptions.

As you know, my Budget for Fiscal Year 2001 substantially expands our efforts to provide affordable housing. The Budget provides a total of $32 billion—$6 billion more than last year—with increases for all of HUD's core programs. And as the improved administration of HUD and the FHA make available additional resources, we will have the opportunity to do even more to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable housing.

Therefore, I direct you to report to me within 160 days your recommendations on how newly available funds can be used to further strengthen Federal housing programs and develop a plan to enhance comprehensive affordable housing opportunities.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 8.

Remarks on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 8, 2000

The President. Wasn't she great? I don't think the rest of us need to say much. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Senator Kennedy and Congressman Gephardt, Congressman Bonior, and all the Members of the House who are here with us today. I want to thank the members of the administration who are here, in addition to Mr. Podesta: Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Gene Sperling, Deputy Labor Secretary Ed Montgomery. I thank the religious leaders who are here, including Reverend Paul Sherry, the former president of the United Church of Christ; the Reverend David Beckmann, the president of Bread for the World; and the other community leaders.

But most important of all, I want to thank Cheryl Costas for being here, because we're here today on behalf of her and so many people like her all across our country. People who work for the minimum wage often don't get a chance to see the White House. They don't have time to come, even for the public tours. They work hard every day. They stock our store shelves, wash dishes at our restaurants, clean our offices at night, care for our kids during the day. They're in every town and every city in our country. They're of every racial and ethnic and religious group. They have in common the minimum wage. And they need a raise, and as you saw, they deserve a raise.

We are here today to ask Congress to give it to them. Ever since I ran for President

in 1992, I've had a vision of making our Nation a place where everyone—everyone—responsible enough to work for it could have a share of the American dream. Over the last 7 years, with the help of a lot of you here today, we've made a lot of headway toward that goal, turning the economy around and continuing the longest economic expansion in our history. I want to continue doing that.

I want us not to squander the surplus but to save Social Security and Medicare, to invest in education, and to pay our debt down. I also have tried very hard not just to generate jobs but to help people who are working hard for less. That's why we expanded the earned-income tax credit, and I've asked Congress to expand it again. That's why we passed the family and medical leave law, and I've asked Congress to expand it again. And that's why, with bipartisan support in 1996, we raised the minimum wage to $5.15 an hour, over 2 years. And now it's time to do it again, to $6.15 an hour.

We have bipartisan support again in Congress, but once again, the Republican leadership is trying to stop us. They know they can't win on the facts. Back in 1996—listen to what was said the last time we tried to raise the minimum wage. In 1996, Republican leaders said that a higher minimum wage, and I quote, "was a job killer cloaked in kindness." They warned that it would throw young minorities out of work and lead to—listen to this—a juvenile crime wave of epic proportions.

Time has not been kind to their predictions. [*Laughter*] Today I release a report from the National Economic Council that puts to rest any of the lingering myths about the minimum wage. Since the minimum wage was raised in 1996, our economy has created over 10 million new jobs. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point in 30 years. The employment of minority youth has gone up. Juvenile crime has gone down. We now have the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded. We've cut the welfare rolls in half. And, thanks in part to the minimum wage increase, millions have moved from welfare to work and incomes for even the poorest Americans are rising for the first time in decades.

Now, that's what happened the last time we raised the minimum wage. There are no facts on which to base this opposition anymore. The new report I release today also dispels another myth about the minimum wage, that those who benefit are mostly middle class teenagers working for gas money. Cheryl probably feels a lot like me—I wish I were still a middle class teenager working for gas money. [*Laughter*]

But the fact is that 70 percent of the people on the minimum wage are adults; 60 percent are women; and almost half work full-time. Many are the sole breadwinners, struggling to raise their children on $10,700 a year. And I think Congress ought to think about them when this vote comes up.

Today, there are more than 10 million Americans like Cheryl working for $5.15 an hour. You heard her say it's hard to live on that, especially if you have children. But no Americans who works full time should raise their children in poverty. This modest increase would simply restore the minimum wage to what it was in real dollar terms in 1982. People who are against this should have to confront that fact.

For a full-time worker, however, this would mean another $2,000 a year. And if you're on the minimum wage, that's real money, enough money for a family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay rent for 5 months.

This is the right thing to do for working families, the right thing to do for our economy, at a time when we've got labor shortages that will draw more people back into the labor market. Studies from Princeton to my own Council of Economic Advisers show that's exactly what happens when you raise the minimum wage: Increase the reward for work, and people who weren't looking for jobs decide to look and go to work.

There are a dozen good reasons to raise the minimum wage and not a single good argument against it. Even the Republican leadership understands that. So instead of arguing the facts, they're playing legislative sleight of hand. For example, they're now using the minimum wage as a vehicle to repeal worker protections and pass irresponsible tax cuts that would threaten our fiscal discipline and jeopardize our ability to save

Social Security and Medicare and pay the debt down by 2013.

They also say they want to put this in over 3 years, not 2. That would mean $900 less in wages for a full-time minimum wage worker. If Republican leaders send me a bill that makes workers wait for another year for their full pay raise and holds the minimum wage hostage for risky tax cuts that threaten our prosperity, I'll veto it.

It is time to stop nickel-and-diming the American working people out of the money that they need and deserve. This is just wrong. This is wrong. We have destroyed every single argument against raising the minimum wage. They're gone. All you've got now is legislative game playing; and it's wrong.

I want a clean, straightforward bill to raise the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years, and I intend to sign it.

Let me say to all of you, I am profoundly grateful for the prosperity our Nation enjoys today, grateful for the opportunity that our administration has had to play a role in it. But I will never be satisfied as long as there are people like Cheryl out there. I mean, what else can you ask this woman to do? She's kept her family together. Her husband has a disability. She's supporting four kids. She's going to school full time. Now, how can Congress justify saying no to her?

That's what I want to know. Let's play games on another bill. They're going to pass a lot of other bills. Can't we put the working people of this country first for a change here and put political games second?

I'd like to now introduce to speak the first of a series of Members of Congress, without whom this fight could never be waged. And I am profoundly grateful to Representative David Bonior for nearly 25 years of fighting for people like Cheryl Costas.

Congressman Bonior.

[*At this point, Members of Congress made brief remarks.*]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, all that needs to be said has been said. But what needs to be done has not been done. So I ask you to leave here remembering the stirring words of our leaders in Congress and the profoundly moving story of Cheryl Costas. And just remember, there's a lot more people like her out there. Remember what Dick Gephardt told you: Just ask every Member of Congress to imagine how long they could live on the minimum wage.

This is the right thing to do. We're still here after over 220 years because when the chips are down, we mostly do the right thing, in spite of ourselves. Ask them to do the right thing.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cheryl Costas, minimum wage earner, who introduced the President.

Exchange With Reporters on the South Lawn

March 8, 2000

Minimum Wage Legislation

The President. Hi, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. Do you have the votes?

The President. We don't know yet.

Q. How are the votes going?

The President. We don't know yet. That's why we're here today. We're working it.

Q. You don't know?

The President. If we can get the right bill before them, we have the votes. I don't know if we've got the votes to get the right bill before them, you know, to get through all the thicket of rulemaking. But we're working it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:09 a.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies

March 8, 2000

Thank you very much, President Brody, Dean Wolfowitz. I thank all the members of our administration who are here—Secretary Daley, who is coordinating our efforts in the Congress; Secretary Summers; Secretary Glickman. I want to say a special word of thanks to Ambassador Barshefsky and National Economic Adviser Gene Sperling who

negotiated this agreement with China and wrung the last drop of blood out of it. And my National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger, I thank him for his great advocacy; Ambassador Holbrooke; to our OPIC President, George Munoz.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of a very important member of our economic team, Lael Brainard, because her mother works here at SAIS, and I want her mother to know she's done a good job. She may never speak to me again, but her mother will be happy. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the distinguished people in the audience, who care so much about China, and the faculty and the students here of this magnificent institution. And I want to thank my longtime friend Lee Hamilton. If I had any respect for this audience, I would just ask you to wait 5 minutes; I'd run out and copy his speech, hand it to you. He said exactly what I wanted to say in about 2,000 fewer words. [*Laughter*]

I also want to say, President Brody and Dean Wolfowitz, how much I appreciate the involvement of Johns Hopkins and the School for Advanced International Studies in China, in particular, at this moment in history and for giving me the chance to come here and talk about what is one of the most important decisions America has made in years.

Last fall, as all of you know, the United States signed the agreement to bring China into the WTO on terms that will open its market to American products and investment. When China concludes similar agreements with other countries, it will join the WTO. But as Lee said, for us to benefit from that, we must first grant it permanent normal trading status, the same arrangement we have given other countries in the WTO. Before coming here today, I submitted legislation to Congress to do that, and I again publicly urge Congress to approve it as soon as possible.

Again, I want to emphasize what has already been said. Congress will not be voting on whether China will join the WTO. Congress can only decide whether the United States will share in the economic benefits of China joining the WTO. A vote against PNTR will cost America jobs, as our competitors in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere capture Chinese markets that we otherwise would have served.

Supporting China's entry into the WTO, however, is about more than our economic interests. It is clearly in our larger national interest. It represents the most significant opportunity that we have had to create positive change in China since the 1970's, when President Nixon first went there, and later in the decade when President Carter normalized relations. I am working as hard as I can to convince Congress and the American people to seize this opportunity.

For a long time now, the United States has debated its relationship with China through all the changes, particularly of the last century. And like all human beings everywhere, we see this relationship through the prism of our own experience. In the early 1900's, most Americans saw China either through the eyes of traders seeking new markets or missionaries seeking new converts. During World War II, China was our ally, during the Korean war, our adversary. At the dawn of the cold war, when I was a young boy, beginning to study such things, it was a cudgel in a political battle: Who lost China? Later, it was a counterweight to the Soviet Union. And now, in some people's eyes, it's a caricature. Will it be the next great capitalist tiger with the biggest market in the world, or the world's last great communist dragon and a threat to stability in Asia?

Through all the changes in China and the changes in our perception of China, there has been one constant: We understand that America has a profound stake in what happens in China and how China relates to the rest of the world. That's why, for 30 years, every President, without regard to party, has worked for a China that contributes to the stability of Asia, that is open to the world, that upholds the rule of law at home and abroad.

Of course, the path that China takes to the future is a choice China will make. We cannot control that choice; we can only influence it. But we must recognize that we do have complete control over what we do. We can work to pull China in the right direction, or we can turn our backs and almost certainly push it in the wrong direction.

The WTO agreement will move China in the right direction. It will advance the goals America has worked for in China for the past three decades. And of course, it will advance our own economic interests.

Economically, this agreement is the equivalent of a one-way street. It requires China to open its markets, with a fifth of the world's population, potentially, the biggest markets in the world, to both our products and services in unprecedented new ways. All we do is to agree to maintain the present access which China enjoys. Chinese tariffs, from telecommunications products to automobiles to agriculture, will fall by half or more over just 5 years. For the first time, our companies will be able to sell and distribute products in China made by workers here in America, without being forced to relocate manufacturing to China, sell through the Chinese Government, or transfer valuable technology. For the first time, we'll be able to export products without exporting jobs.

Meanwhile, we'll get valuable new safeguards against any surges of imports from China. We're already preparing for the largest enforcement effort ever given for a trade agreement.

If Congress passes PNTR, we reap these rewards. If Congress rejects it, our competitors reap these rewards. Again, we must understand the consequences of saying no. If we don't sell our products to China, someone else will step into the breach, and we'll spend the next 20 years wondering why in the wide world we handed over the benefits we negotiated to other people.

Of course, we're going to continue our efforts not just to expand trade but to expand it in a way that reinforces our fundamental values and, for me, the way the global economic system must move. Trade must not be a race to the bottom, whether we're talking about child labor or basic working conditions or the environment. The more we avoid dealing with these issues, the more we fuel the fires of protectionism. That's why we'll continue our efforts to make the WTO itself more open, more transparent, more participatory, and to elevate the consideration of labor and environmental issues in trade.

But most of the critics of the China-WTO agreement do not seriously question its economic benefits. They're more likely to say things like this: "China is a growing threat to Taiwan and its neighbors. We shouldn't strengthen it," or, "China violates labor rights and human rights. We shouldn't reward it," or, "China is a dangerous proliferator. We shouldn't empower it."

These concerns are valid, but the conclusion of those who raise them as an argument against China-WTO isn't. China is a one-party state that does not tolerate opposition. It does deny its citizens fundamental rights of free speech and religious expression. It does define its interests in the world sometimes in ways that are dramatically at odds from our own. But the question is not whether we approve or disapprove of China's practices. The question is, what's the smartest thing to do to improve these practices?

I believe the choice between economic rights and human rights, between economic security and national security, is a false one. Membership in the WTO, of course, will not create a free society in China overnight or guarantee that China will play by global rules. But over time, I believe it will move China faster and further in the right direction and certainly will do that more than rejection would. To understand how, it's important to understand why China is willing to do what it has undertaken to perform in this agreement.

Over the last 20 years, China has made great progress in building a new economy, lifting more than 200 million people out of abject poverty; linking so many people through its new communications network that it's adding the equivalent of a new Baby Bell every year. Nationwide, China has seen the emergence of more than a million nonprofit and social organizations and a 2,500 percent explosion of print and broadcast media.

But its economy still is not creating jobs fast enough to meet the needs of the people. Only about a third of the economy is private enterprise. Nearly 60 percent of the investment and 80 percent of all business lending still goes toward state-owned dinosaurs that

are least likely to survive in the global economy and most likely to be vulnerable to corruption.

Much of China's economy today still operates under the old theory that if only they had shoveled coal into the furnaces faster, the *Titanic* would have stayed afloat. It is ironic, I think, that so many Americans are concerned about the impact on the world of a strong China in the 21st century. But the danger of a weak China, beset by internal chaos and the old nightmares of disintegration, it's all so real, and the leaders of China know this as well.

So they face a dilemma. They realize that if they open China's market to global competition, they risk unleashing forces beyond their control of temporary unemployment, social unrest, and greater demand for freedom. But they also know that without competition from the outside, China will not be able to attract the investment necessary to build a modern, successful economy. And the failure to do that could be even more destabilizing, with more negative consequence.

So with this agreement, China has chosen reform, despite the risks. It has chosen to overcome a great wall of suspicion and insecurity and to engage the rest of the world. The question for the United States, therefore, is, do we want to support that choice or reject it, becoming bystanders as the rest of the world rushes in. That would be a mistake of truly historic proportions.

You know, as we debate about China here—and we love to do it; it absorbs a great deal of our time and energy—it's easy to forget that the Chinese leaders and their people are also engaged in a debate about us there. And many of them believe that we honestly don't want their country to assume a respected place in the world. If China joins the WTO but we turn our backs on them, it will confirm their fears.

All I can say to you is that everything I have learned about China as President and before and everything I have learned about human nature in over half a century of living, now convinces me that we have a far greater chance of having a positive influence on China's actions if we welcome China into the world community, instead of shutting it out.

Under this agreement, some of China's most important decisions for the first time will be subject to the review of an international body, with rules and binding dispute settlement. Now, opponents say this doesn't matter; China will just break its promises. Well, any of you who follow these WTO matters know that China is not the only person that could be accused of not honoring the rulemaking process. If any of you happen to be especially concerned about bananas and beef, you could probably stand up and give a soliloquy on that. And now we in the United States have been confronted with a very difficult decision, because they've made a decision that we think is plainly wrong, in an area that affects our export economy.

But I will say this: We're still better off having a system in which actions will be subject to rules embraced and judgments passed by 135 nations. And we're far more likely to find acceptable resolutions to differences of opinion in this context than if there is none at all.

The change this agreement can bring from outside is quite extraordinary. But I think you could make an argument that it will be nothing compared to the changes that this agreement will spark from the inside out in China. By joining the WTO, China is not simply agreeing to import more of our products; it is agreeing to import one of democracy's most cherished values, economic freedom. The more China liberalizes its economy, the more fully it will liberate the potential of its people, their initiative, their imagination, their remarkable spirit of enterprise. And when individuals have the power not just to dream but to realize their dreams, they will demand a greater say.

Already, more and more, China's best and brightest are starting their own companies, or seeking jobs with foreign-owned companies, where generally they get higher pay, more respect, and a better working environment. In fits and starts, for the first time, China may become a society where people get ahead based on what they know rather than who they know. Chinese firms, more and more, are realizing that unless they treat employees with respect, they will lose out in the competition for top talent. The process will only accelerate if China joins the WTO,

and we should encourage it because it will lift standards for Chinese workers and their expectations.

There's something even more revolutionary at work here. By lowering the barriers that protect state-owned industries, China is speeding the process that is removing Government from vast areas of people's lives.

In the past, virtually every Chinese citizen woke up in an apartment or a house owned by the Government, went to work in a factory or a farm run by the Government, and read newspapers published by the Government. State-run workplaces also operated the schools where they sent their children, the clinics where they received health care, the stores where they bought food. That system was a big source of the Communist Party's power. Now people are leaving those firms. And when China joins the WTO, they will leave them faster.

The Chinese Government no longer will be everyone's employer, landlord, shopkeeper, and nanny all rolled into one. It will have fewer instruments, therefore, with which to control people's lives. And that may lead to very profound change.

A few weeks ago, the Washington Post had a good story about the impact of these changes on the city of Shenyang. Since 1949, most of the people of Shenyang have worked in massive, state-run industries. But as these old factories and mills shut down, people are losing their jobs and their benefits. Last year, Beijing announced it was going to be awarding bonus checks to Chinese citizens to celebrate China's 50th anniversary under communism. But Shenyang didn't have the money to pay, and there was a massive local protest.

To ease tensions, the local government has given the people a greater say in how their city is run. On a limited basis, citizens now have the right to vote in local elections—not exactly a democracy; the party still puts up the candidate and decides who can vote, but it is a first step. And it goes beyond Shenyang. Local elections now are held in the vast majority of the country's 900,000 villages.

When asked why, one party official in Shenyang said, "This is the beginning of a process. We realize that in order to improve social control, we have got to let the masses have a say." Well, sooner or later that official will find that the genie of freedom will not go back into the bottle. As Justice Earl Warren once said, "Liberty is the most contagious force in the world."

In the new century, liberty will spread by cell phone and cable modem. In the past year, the number of Internet addresses in China has more than quadrupled from 2 million to 9 million. This year, the number is expected to grow to over 20 million. When China joins the WTO, by 2005, it will eliminate tariffs on information technology products, making the tools of communication even cheaper, better, and more widely available. We know how much the Internet has changed America, and we are already an open society. Imagine how much it could change China.

Now, there's no question China has been trying to crackdown on the Internet. Good luck! [*Laughter*] That's sort of like trying to nail Jello to the wall. [*Laughter*] But I would argue to you that their effort to do that just proves how real these changes are and how much they threaten the status quo. It's not an argument for slowing down the effort to bring China into the world; it's an argument for accelerating that effort. In the knowledge economy, economic innovation and political empowerment, whether anyone likes it or not, will inevitably go hand in hand.

Now, of course, bringing China into the WTO doesn't guarantee that it will choose political reform. But accelerating the progress, the process of economic change, will force China to confront that choice sooner, and it will make the imperative for the right choice stronger. And again I ask, if China is willing to take this risk—and these leaders are very intelligent people; they know exactly what they're doing—if they're willing to take this risk, how can we turn our backs on the chance to take them up on it?

Now, I want to be clear. I understand that this is not, in and of itself, a human rights problem. But still, it is likely to have a profound impact on human rights and political liberty. Change will only come through a combination of internal pressure and external validation of China's human rights struggle. We have to maintain our leadership in the

latter as well, even as the WTO contributes to the former.

We sanctioned China under the International Religious Freedom Act last year. We're again sponsoring a resolution in the U.N. Human Rights Commission condemning China's human rights record this year. We will also continue to press China to respect global norms on nonproliferation. And we will continue to reject the use of force as a means to resolve the Taiwan question, making absolutely clear that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan. There must be a shift from threat to dialog across the Taiwan Strait. And we will continue to encourage both sides to seize this opportunity after the Taiwan election.

In other words, we must continue to defend our interests and our ideals with candor and consistency. But we can't do that by isolating China from the very forces most likely to change it. Doing so would be a gift to the hardliners in China's Government, who don't want their country to be part of the world, the same people willing to settle differences with Taiwan by force, the same people most threatened by our alliance with Japan and Korea, the same people who want to keep the Chinese military selling dangerous technologies around the world, the same people whose first instinct in the face of opposition is to throw people in prison. If we want to strengthen their hand within China, we should reject the China-WTO agreement.

Voting against PNTR won't free a single prisoner or create a single job in America or reassure a single American ally in Asia. It will simply empower the most rigid anti-democratic elements in the Chinese Government. It would leave the Chinese people with less contact with the democratic world and more resistance from their Government to outside forces. Our friends and allies would wonder why, after 30 years of pushing China in the right direction, we turned our backs, now that they finally appear to be willing to take us up on it.

I find it encouraging that the people with the greatest interest in seeing China change agree with this analysis. The people of Taiwan agree. Despite the tensions with Beijing, they are doing everything they can to cement their economic ties with the mainland, and they want to see China in the WTO.

The people of Hong Kong agree. I recently received a letter from Martin Lee, the leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, who has spent a lifetime struggling for free elections and free expression for his people. He wrote to me that this agreement, and I want to quote it, "represents the best long-term hope for China to become a member of good standing in the international community. We fear that should ratification fail, any hope for political and legal reform process would also recede." Martin Lee wants us to vote in favor of PNTR.

Most evangelicals who have missions in China also want China in the WTO. They know it will encourage freedom of thought and more contact with the outside world. Many of the people who paid the greatest price under Chinese repression agree, too. Ren Wanding is one of the fathers of the Chinese human rights movement. In the late 1970's, he was thrown into prison for founding the China Human Rights League. In the 1980's, he helped lead the demonstration in Tiananmen Square. In the 1990's, he was thrown in prison yet again. Yet, he says of this deal, "Before, the sky was black. Now it is light. This can be a new beginning."

For these people, fighting for freedom in China is not an academic exercise or a chance to give a speech that might be on television. It is their life's work. And for many of them, they have risked their lives to pursue it. I believe if this agreement were a Trojan Horse, they would be smart enough to see it. They are telling us that it's the right thing to do, and they are plainly right.

So if you believe in a future of greater openness and freedom for the people of China, you ought to be for this agreement. If you believe in a future of greater prosperity for the American people, you certainly should be for this agreement. If you believe in a future of peace and security for Asia and the world, you should be for this agreement. This is the right thing to do. It's an historic opportunity and a profound American responsibility.

I'll do all I can to convince Congress and the American people to support it. And today I ask for your help.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. in the Kenny Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to William R. Brody, president, Johns Hopkins University; and Paul Wolfowitz, dean, and Joanne Brainard, executive assistant to the associate dean for student affairs, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. The President also referred to PNTR, permanent normal trade relations.

Message to the Congress on Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status for China

March 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

Last November, after years of negotiation, we completed a bilateral agreement on accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the People's Republic of China (Agreement). The Agreement will dramatically cut import barriers currently imposed on American products and services. It is enforceable and will lock in and expand access to virtually all sectors of China's economy. The Agreement meets the high standards we set in all areas, from creating export opportunities for our businesses, farmers, and working people, to strengthening our guarantees of fair trade. It is clearly in our economic interest. China is concluding agreements with other countries to accede to the WTO. The issue is whether Americans get the full benefit of the strong agreement we negotiated. To do that, we need to enact permanent Normal Trade Relations (NTR) for China.

We give up nothing with this Agreement. As China enters the WTO, the United States makes no changes in our current market access policies. We preserve our right to withdraw market access for China in the event of a national security emergency. We make no changes in laws controlling the export of sensitive technology. We amend none of our trade laws. In fact, our protections against unfair trade practices and potential import surges are stronger with the Agreement than without it.

Our choice is clear. We must enact permanent NTR for China or risk losing the full benefits of the Agreement we negotiated, including broad market access, special import protections, and rights to enforce China's commitments through WTO dispute settlement. All WTO members, including the United States, pledge to grant one another permanent NTR to enjoy the full benefits in one another's markets. If the Congress were to fail to pass permanent NTR for China, our Asian, Latin American, Canadian, and European competitors would reap these benefits, but American farmers and other workers and our businesses might well be left behind.

We are firmly committed to vigorous monitoring and enforcement of China's commitments, and will work closely with the Congress on this. We will maximize use of the WTO's review mechanisms, strengthen U.S. monitoring and enforcement capabilities, ensure regular reporting to the Congress on China's compliance, and enforce the strong China-specific import surge protections we negotiated. I have requested significant new funding for China trade compliance.

We must also continue our efforts to make the WTO itself more open, transparent, and participatory, and to elevate consideration of labor and the environment in trade. We must recognize the value that the WTO serves today in fostering a global, rules-based system of international trade—one that has fostered global growth and prosperity over the past half century. Bringing China into that rules-based system advances the right kind of reform in China.

The Agreement is in the fundamental interest of American security and reform in China. By integrating China more fully into the Pacific and global economies, it will strengthen China's stake in peace and stability. Within China, it will help to develop the rule of law; strengthen the role of market forces; and increase the contacts China's citizens have with each other and the outside world. While we will continue to have strong disagreements with China over issues ranging from human rights to religious tolerance to foreign policy, we believe that bringing

China into the WTO pushes China in the right direction in all of these areas.

I, therefore, with this letter transmit to the Congress legislation authorizing the President to terminate application of Title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 to the People's Republic of China and extend permanent Normal Trade Relations treatment to products from China. The legislation specifies that the President's determination becomes effective only when China becomes a member of the WTO, and only after a certification that the terms and conditions of China's accession to the WTO are at least equivalent to those agreed to between the United States and China in our November 15, 1999, Agreement. I urge that the Congress consider this legislation as soon as possible.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 8, 2000.

Interview With Greta Van Susteren of CNN's Burden of Proof

March 8, 2000

Memphis Shootings

Ms. Van Susteren. Mr. President, thank you for joining us today. I want to first ask you your reaction—once again, this time Memphis, a fireman is dead, a police officer, and others. What's your reaction to this shooting?

The President. Well, as we're doing this interview, of course, we don't know all the facts, but it's a tragic thing for the city and for the families, because firemen and police, they put their lives on the line a lot, but they don't expect to be shot at the scene of a burning house. It's a terrible thing. And we just have to find the facts to know what happened and whether anything could have been done about it. It's very, very sad.

Michigan Shooting

Ms. Van Susteren. Another tragedy was the death of the 6-year-old, Kayla, in Michigan. And you met with her mother——

The President. I did.

Ms. Van Susteren. ——this week in the White House. What did you tell her?

The President. Well, first of all, I told her that as a father I could only imagine her heartbreak, that there's nothing worse in life than having your child die before you, especially in tragic circumstances. And I told her I would do what I could to reduce the chances of it happening again. And I was very impressed with her. She and her husband, Kayla's stepfather, I think they really decided they're going to commit themselves to try to do things that will make the schools safer, the streets safer, the kids less vulnerable to this sort of thing. And we talked about some of the specific things we were working on.

Parental Responsibility for Gun Violence

Ms. Van Susteren. And one of the specific things is guns.

The President. Absolutely.

Ms. Van Susteren. When you talk about guns—besides being the President of the United States, you're a lawyer—do you think that the responsibility when a young child uses a gun and kills another child, that some of the responsibility may be cast in the direction of a parent or another adult? Should we hold them libel?

The President. I think if the custodial adult either knowingly or recklessly leaves a gun where a child can get a hold of it, then I think there should be some liability there. It's outrageous that this 6-year-old boy was able to get that gun. And of course, I think there ought to be child trigger locks on these guns. And I think that we should keep working until we develop the technology which will enable us to make handguns that can only be fired by the adults who own them, which is—it's not that far off.

I mean, the accidental gun death rate in America for children under 15 is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 countries combined. So, yes, I do. I think there ought to be some responsibility there, not if there's been a reasonable effort and the child finds a key and gets in a safe or something. But if there is—if it's just total irresponsibility or intentionally leaving a gun in a place where a child could easily get it, I think they should be held responsible.

Ms. Van Susteren. Well, you use the words "knowingly and recklessly," and that standard, it seems to me, is so different. In

some parts of the country where people have lots of guns, the "knowingly and recklessly" standard is so much different from those who might be unfamiliar. How do we decide what's "knowingly and recklessly"——

The President. Well, I think maybe if Congress wanted to legislate in this area—this is normally a State law area. And I offered Federal legislation in the post-Columbine era to deal with this. The Congress could have legislative history in which they could actually cite some examples of what in their view falls on one side of the line and what doesn't. And I think that would be helpful. Or what the Congress could do, if they feel that the circumstances are different from State to State, is to give some incentives for the States to pass such legislation.

I think there are 17 States which have passed legislation that have some form of adult responsibility if children who are below the age of responsibility get guns. But I don't know whether they're identical language or not. There are two different ways you could do that.

Gun Control Legislation

Ms. Van Susteren. You've been battling the gun—trying to get gun legislation for some time, and it seems to be a little bit of a logjam on Capitol Hill. Where's the dispute? Why can't legislation get passed?

The President. Well, I think the main source of dispute now is over closing the gun show loophole. That is, a lot of these—predominantly, the Republican Members of the House, although not all of them, are reluctant to close the gun show loophole. And a huge number of the Republicans in the Senate, although not everyone, 90 percent of them don't want to close the gun show loophole. That is, they don't want to require people at these gun shows and urban flea markets to have to do the same background checks on people who buy guns there, as gun store owners do, and people who buy guns there. And I just think they're dead wrong.

When we passed the Brady bill, 7 years ago now, almost 7 years ago, the NRA and their sympathizers said, "Well, the Brady bill won't do any good because criminals don't buy guns at gun stores." Well, it turns out 500,000 people couldn't get guns because they had a record as a felon, a fugitive, or a stalker.

So now we ought to go to the huge number of people who do buy them at these gun shows and urban flea markets, which is exactly what the NRA said they did 7 years ago. But now that we're trying to get background checks there, all of a sudden they don't want to do it.

So I think it's very important to do. Now, there is some chance of a compromise because Representative John Conyers from Michigan and Chairman Henry Hyde from Illinois have talked back and forth about whether there was a way to close the gun show loophole that the Republicans would let get out of the conference committee, and then we could pass it. And I urged them to work on that yesterday. But I think that's the biggest problem.

Ms. Van Susteren. When I look at this loophole, it seems to me—correct me if I'm wrong—is that one side wants 72 hours to do the background check, and one side says, no, 24 hours. Is that the dispute, 24 versus 72?

The President. Well, not exactly. That's only part of it, and I'll explain that. But there is also the question of what records will be checked and what you do with the people who can't be checked within 24 hours. That is, John Conyers offered a 24-hour background check to Mr. Hyde. That is, the Democrats offered to the Republicans a 24-hour background check as long as there were some provision for holding roughly 5 to 8 percent of the applications that can't be cleared in 24 hours.

That is, believe it or not, over 70 percent of these background checks are done within a matter of an hour. Over 90 percent are done within 24 hours. But a small percentage cannot be done. And in that small percentage, the people that are likely to be rejected are—20 times the rate of rejections in the last 5 percent as in the first 95 percent. So there's a reason for holding those that can't be checked when the records aren't there.

So I think if we can work out something to do with the other 5 percent, we could agree to 95 percent of the people to have

a 24-hour waiting period. It's going to be interesting to see whether they will engage us in good faith on that.

Ms. Van Susteren. So what can we do with that 5 percent? What's your idea?

The President. Well, you enable them to—you give the 72 hours for that 5 percent. And if they're at a rural gun show and they don't know what to do because they want to buy the gun and the gun dealer has got to leave and go on to another place, they should just consummate the sale and have to deposit the gun at the local sheriff's office. And then if it clears, they get their gun. And if it doesn't clear, the gun dealer gets his gun back.

Ms. Van Susteren. In my prior life as a criminal defense lawyer, I had to represent a lot of people who used guns in murders, armed robberies, and I've got to tell you, I don't think any one of them bought it at a gun show or a gun shop. What about those people? What can we do about them?

The President. Well, I think there is no clear and easy answer. What we know is that some of this happens there because we've got—the gun death rate is at a 30-year low. So we know we're doing some good with the Brady bill, and we know we'll do some more good with this. And we also know that a lot of these guns are passed among criminals or sold out of a trunk by somebody alone that wouldn't be covered by the gun show law.

I think what you have to do there is just do a better job of checking people for guns, and if you find somebody—if we do all this and you still find people with unauthorized guns, they have to be punished for that.

I still believe—I would go further. I think that people who buy handguns would have to pass a Brady background check and a safety check and be licensed. I think we ought to license handgun owners the way we license car drivers. I think that will make a difference over the long run.

The other thing I would say is, you've got over 200 million guns in this country. Now, that's slightly overstating the case in terms of the danger, because a huge number of them are in the hands of collectors who are perfectly law-abiding, who have the guns very well secured. And a lot of them are in the hands of hunters, who are law-abiding and have their guns well secured.

But one of the things that I have advocated is a big expansion of the gun buy-back program, because in the places where that's occurred, it's done some good—where you must give people money to bring in their guns, and then you melt them or destroy them otherwise. And I noted just today—I was just stunned to hear that there are a number of Republicans in the House of Representatives that want to stop us from doing the gun buyback program. I can't imagine why they want to stop that.

A lot of cities with Republican mayors have done gun buyback programs. And it's totally voluntary: You bring a gun in; you get a certain amount of money; you gather the guns up; and you destroy them. You're taking that many out of circulation. So those are the kinds of things I think ought to be done.

President's History With Guns

Ms. Van Susteren. Do you have a gun? Have you ever owned one or shot one?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I have owned hunting weapons. I've been given—I've never bought a pistol. I've been given pistols by the State police and others, and I've never kept them. I've never kept a gun in my residence. I've always kept them under secure circumstances outside the house when Chelsea was a little girl coming up and all that. But I have owned guns. And I first—I guess the first gun I had was a .22 when I was 12. I still remember shooting cans off fenceposts in the country with a .22 when I was 12. And I've hunted on and off all my life, not a great deal. I have bad ears, so I would be careful how many times a year I'd go hunting.

But I understand this culture. I've been a part of it. And I was Governor of a State for a dozen years where half of the people had hunting licenses. But I do not think it is right for people who are law-abiding to prevent the passage of these laws that will plainly save lives. I mean, you know, it's no big deal for people who are gun owners or people who are handgun owners to have to undergo a background check. And if it's a minor inconvenience for them to wait a little

bit, it's worth it to save people's lives. We now have evidence that it saves lives.

Nobody complains about going through airport metal detectors anymore, even if they have to go through 2 or 3 times, because they know it saves lives. People don't say we ought to repeal every speed limit or—you could say, "Well, most car drivers are law-abiding, so let's just stop licensing car drivers. Let's stop giving them driver's license tests, because most of them are law-abiding." Well, there would be an uproar if you did that.

So we should do more without eroding law-abiding gun owners' rights to hunt or sport shooting. We should do more to protect ourselves as a community, a lot more. We're the only country in the world that's not doing more, and we've got the death rates to show it. And if we want to save lives, we're going to have to continue to do more. We've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years because we've done more. And we've got to be better. We've got to do more.

Michigan Shooting

Ms. Van Susteren. Taking a look at what happened last week, if you had the legislation that you want, or if we had the legislation the Republicans want, Kayla would still be dead. The legislation wouldn't have prevented that gun from getting into that young boy's hands.

The President. No, but if you had adult responsibility legislation that was clear and unambiguous, at least people would think about it; guys like that would think about it. Even if—suppose this was a drug house, like they say—also, depending on how old these guns are, they would come with child trigger locks if you required them for all gun sales, prospectively. And I'm not at all sure that even a callous, irresponsible drug dealer with a 6-year-old kid in the house wouldn't leave a child trigger lock on a gun.

Gun Control Legislation

Ms. Van Susteren. Which raises the other question. Trigger locks are for guns that are from this day forward. What do we do with these millions of guns that are already out there?

The President. One of the things I think we ought to look at is see how you retrofit them, where we could sell them, what we should do with them. And I'm just—if I could pass this, then I'd start looking at what to do with the guns that are out there now, whether we could get trigger locks for them and how we'd do it.

Right now, I've been waiting—we've been waiting 8 months. Columbine happened almost a year ago. Then the Senate passed a bill; the House passed a much weaker bill. We've been waiting 8 months for these people to get together with the Senate and the House and come up with a bill and send it to me.

And so, I've always tried to focus dealing with the Congress not just on what I thought was ideal but on what we would actually achieve. And I think every American now knows that the intense lobbying of the NRA and the other gun groups has had a profound impact on the House and on the Republican caucus in the Senate. But still, there are some people who are brave enough to stand up against it and to do reasonable things. So let's get this done, and then let's see where we go.

Ms. Van Susteren. I spoke to a representative of the NRA today who said that last summer, they had completely agreed on the bill in Congress, but that it was the Democrats and the White House that felt that the legislation in the House should be aborted. Is that right?

The President. No, they agreed on the House bill because it didn't do anything to close the gun show loophole. They didn't want—we've got to close the gun show loophole. We feel we do. I think they would come along now with child trigger locks. I think they would, and I know they support the custodial parent being held responsible when there's an egregious act there of intentional or reckless—allowing a child to have a gun. And I appreciate that.

I think they support more gun prosecutors and law enforcement officials, and I appreciate that. I don't know where they are—maybe they would go along with the banning of the large ammunition clips. They've never been for that before, but they might be for that. But their new, big, bottom line is we must never, ever, ever do a background

check on somebody at a gun show unless you can do it in 30 seconds or something.

I don't mind going to 24 hours, as long as you've got an escape hatch for the people you can't clear in 24 hours because I'll say again, they are 20 times more likely to be turned down, that small percentage of people, than the general population that we can clear in 24 hours.

Ms. Van Susteren. One final question. The Vice President wants—or has suggested that we have photo licensing. What is your reaction to that?

The President. I think it's a good idea.

Ms. Van Susteren. Why?

The President. Because I think that it will establish a nexus between—first of all, to get a license, you ought to have to pass a safety course and the Brady background check. I think that's good. And I think then it will be easier to track the guns. We're trying to develop technology to track all guns and all bullets used in crimes and ultimately get them back to where they started. And I think for that reason—for crime control reasons and for safety reasons, it would be a good thing to do.

Just like with licensed drivers, I think it's a community safety requirement that we ought to do. I think he's absolutely right about it. And there's not a good argument not to do it.

Ms. Van Susteren. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to 6-year-old Kayla Rolland, who was shot and mortally wounded by a 6-year-old classmate in Mount Morris Township, MI; and her mother and stepfather, Veronica and Michael McQueen. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the National Money Laundering Strategy for 2000

March 8, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the provisions of section 2(a) of Public Law 105–310 (18 U.S.C. 5341(a)(2)), I transmit herewith the National Money Laundering Strategy for 2000.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 8, 2000.

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

March 9, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you, Senator Daschle. Thank you, Senator Akaka, Senator Breaux, Senator Bryan, Senator Dorgan, Senator Sarbanes, and Senator Wyden, for joining us today. And thank you, Secretary Shalala, for the leading role you've played in the development of our proposal to provide a voluntary prescription drug benefit for seniors under Medicare.

Minimum Wage Legislation

I want to make a few comments on Senator Daschle's very fine statement and the principles he outlined. But first I'd like to say a word about another debate going on in the House today over the minimum wage. Once again, the Republican leadership has derailed what should be a simple vote on the minimum wage, with a maximum of political maneuvering. The vote is yet to be taken, but we all know the results are already in. The special interests will win, and the national interests will wait.

We will raise the minimum wage but not with the Republican bill that stacks the deck against our workers. It is loaded with poison pills that penalize workers and with risky tax cuts that threaten our prosperity and the future of Social Security and Medicare.

The combined actions of the majority in the House and the Senate on all their tax cuts is now far in excess of what I have recommended and in excess of what we can afford and still pay down the debt and reform Social Security and Medicare and continue to invest in education.

Congress should send me a bill I can sign, not one I'll have to veto, a clean, straightforward bill that raises the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years. If you remember

the incredible day we had yesterday with Cheryl Costas, there are 10 million people that deserve this, and they ought to get it.

By the end of the day, two things will be clear about the minimum wage: We do have the votes to pass it, but the Republicans still have the votes to kill it. Today's vote, however, is not the final word, and I will continue to work with a bipartisan majority in the Congress that supports a real increase in the minimum wage.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Now, with regard to the statement Senator Daschle just made, the Senate Democrats have come today to say that they are together on principles for a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit, something so many seniors need and far too few have. There have been a lot of proposals on the table, a good number of good ideas. Today we are moving forward together by uniting around common principles, setting standards that any prescription drug plan should meet. That is a significant step, moving us further toward the day when every older American has the choice of affordable prescription drugs.

More than three in five seniors and people with disabilities still lack prescription drug coverage that is dependable, coverage that could lengthen and enrich their lives. Our budget would extend them that lifeline and create a reserve of $35 billion to build on this new benefit to protect those who carry the heavy burden of catastrophic drug costs.

Most important, our plan, as Senator Daschle said, embodies the essential principles articulated here today and embraced by the Senate Democrats. I think any plan Congress passes should do the same. It should be optional, affordable, accessible to all. It should use price competition, not price controls. It should boost seniors' bargaining power to get the best prices possible. It should be part of an overall plan to strengthen and modernize Medicare.

I think the bargaining power issue is especially important when we read story after story of American senior citizens crossing the border into Canada to buy drugs, made in America, in Canada at much less cost. And if this is not done, then sooner or later, the voters of this country will vote with their feet, and the Congress will have a follow suit, and you will see huge numbers of people bringing those drugs in from Canada.

No American can understand why you can go to Canada and buy a drug made in America for dramatically less than you have to pay for it in America. And if our seniors had the bargaining power they deserve under this proposal, that gap in prices would evaporate quite quickly.

We owe it to our people, especially to our seniors, to pass a good prescription drug plan. We shouldn't be satisfied with half measures. Keep in mind that a tax deduction would help only the wealthiest seniors, and a block grant, which some in the majority have proposed, would help only the very poorest. Neither alternative would do anything for the seniors with modest middle incomes between $15,000 and $50,000 a year.

As Secretary Shalala reminded me today, over half of the seniors who lack prescription drug coverage, especially a lot of them in rural areas—and you have a lot of these Members here who represent—these Senators—States with significant rural areas—over half of those without the coverage have incomes in excess of 150 percent of the poverty rate.

So I would like to, again, urge the majority to work with us on something that covers everyone, that people can buy into. There is no better time to get this done. The economy is strong. People have a sense of purpose over this. People talk to me about this everywhere I go. And we have an opportunity now not just to pay down the debt and extend the life of Social Security and Medicare but to extend the lives of a lot of seniors by adding this prescription drug benefit. And I certainly hope we'll do it.

Thank you.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, today is the day that the case of Elian Gonzalez, after many delays, is being heard in a courtroom in Miami. I would like your opinion on the subject. You've always said it must go to the courts. Do you think we'll get a solution soon?

The President. Well, I hope so. I can't believe it's in the young man's interest for this to be dragged out much longer. But it

is in the courts, and I think while it's in the courts, we shouldn't comment.

John [John Palmer, NBC News].

2000 Presidential Election

Q. We'd like to get your comments on the Bradley decision to pull out of the race and his decision to not release his delegates. We're curious to what you think about that.

The President. Well, I thought, first of all, he made a very fine statement. I heard most of it this morning before I had to pull away, and I was very moved by his statement and very grateful for the tone and tenor of it and for his support for the Vice President.

The second thing that occurred to me was that if you looked at the issues he raised and the way in which he raised them, it recalled again how very much more substantive, in my judgment, the debate was on the Democratic side on the issues and how much more agreement there was. On the Republican side, there was far more disagreement, I think, and it was far less rooted in issues that will really affect the American people and move forward. So I'm very grateful.

As to the delegates, I think that he knows the Vice President will have enough votes to win on the first round. He wants those people to be able to go to the convention pledged to him. They ran pledged to him. And then what typically happens at a convention is that if there is a united party, is at the appropriate time the vote is made unanimous.

But I can understand why a lot of them probably—I imagine he was talking to—a lot of them called him and said, "Look, we'd just like to go pledged to you. We're all going to be together. We're going to honor your wishes. We're going to support the nominee of our party." But this is, I think, a matter of pride for what they have accomplished to date. I don't think you should read too much into that. I certainly didn't. I thought he gave a very fine statement, and I wish him well.

President's Upcoming Visit to Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, your trip to Pakistan, is this some kind of an endorsement to the military government? That's what he said in Karachi. And also, if it's support for his government, how can you still, Mr. President, answer to Nawaz Sharif, who's in jail, and he came specially on a special trip to Washington on the Fourth of July? And he did say that—and I think Mrs. Sharif also wrote a letter to you, and you have spoken with all these leaders. Sir, what do you expect from this visit also?

The President. Well, first of all, it's certainly not an endorsement of the military coup. I've made that clear. We made it clear yesterday. But it is a recognition, in my judgment, that America's interests and values would be advanced if we maintained some contact with and communications with the Pakistani Government. And I think that our ability to have a positive influence on the future direction of Pakistan, in terms of the restoration of democracy, in terms of the ultimate resolution of issues in the Indian subcontinent, and in terms of avoiding further dangerous conflicts will be greater if we maintain our cooperation.

After all, Pakistan was our ally throughout the cold war. Since I've been President, Pakistan on more than one occasion has helped us to arrest terrorists, often at some risk to the regime. And as you pointed out, the then-Prime Minister, Sharif, pulled the Pakistani troops back across the line of control after a July 4th meeting with me last year. So I think it would be a mistake not to go, but it would be a grave mistake for people to think that my going represents some sort of endorsement of a nondemocratic process which occurred there. That's not true.

You, and then the little boy there.

Minimum Wage Legislation

Q. You said that there will be some room for negotiation on the minimum wage issue in terms of—obviously, your plan, the Democrats plan is for 2 years, the Republicans is for 3 years with a tax cut. Do you think ultimately we'll see a compromise?

The President. I would like to see a bill we can all sign. Our side—not just me but our Members of Congress—we offered them some very helpful small-business tax cuts. We're not unmindful of the fact that one of the reasons we've had this recovery is that every year we've had a record number of new small businesses starting, that not all of them make a lot of money, especially in the early

years. And we responded to their desire to have small-business tax incentives and cuts with a rather generous proposal, and we got nowhere. They, instead, put this highly regressive, overly expensive program through that would increase inequality in America at a time when we're trying to reduce it and having nothing to do with the minimum wage.

There are also—let me say, there are other provisions in this bill which actually try to make the rest of America's work force pay with reductions in worker protections in return for the minimum wage workers getting a pay increase, and I don't think that's right, either. We shouldn't be pitting one group of workers against another.

And are we willing to talk? Of course. Always. Keep in mind, I had the conferees here on the gun safety issues this week, and we're trying to get the conference up and going there, and we're working our hearts out on it. But we have to—yes, we're willing to work on it. But I'm telling you, it is wrong, as well as this country is doing, with the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, more wealth being created than any time in history, any time in the history of this country, any time in the history of the world, not to raise the minimum wage. It's wrong.

Young man, did you have a question?

President's Autograph

Q. May I please have an autograph for my little sister?

The President. Absolutely. [*Laughter*]

Gays in the Military

Q. There is a report this morning that there is a rise in the military of harassment, both physical and verbal, of gay and lesbian members of the military. First of all, are you concerned about that report? And do you believe that the military is doing enough to prevent this from happening?

The President. Well, I'd like to make a couple of points. I'm concerned about the report. I haven't read it. Secretary Cohen hasn't read it. We will read it and take appropriate action. I do want to point out that in the last several months the Pentagon has issued new guidelines for implementing the policies related to gays in the military, specifically designed to reduce harassment. They have started new training programs, and the Secretary of Defense has made it absolutely clear what the policy is and is not.

So if—I expect—let me just say, if this report is accurate, I would expect to see a substantial improvement this year—substantial. But I also want to make sure that we study the report in the White House, that the Secretary of Defense studies it, and that we take any appropriate action that might be called for. But I knew nothing about the report until I read the morning press reports, so I can't comment further than that.

Yes.

2000 Census

Q. Mr. President, the census has started, after being politicized over the last couple of years. At some point, should this debate of statistical sampling versus pure enumeration be resolved so that there's a consistency between congressional funding—between Government funding and the congressional redistricting?

The President. Well, of course, it should be. But I think it ought to be resolved in favor of what will give us the most accurate count. Look, the only reason I favored statistical sampling is because the National Science Foundation said that was the most accurate way to count people and that we undercounted large numbers of Americans in many States last year. I'm for whatever's most accurate.

And I don't think it should be a political deal. I remember one prominent House Member, who should remain unnamed, I think, once suggested to me that I was taking a foolish position here, that I ought to be for hiring 2, 3, 4, million people who were overwhelmingly Democratic voters, in an election year, to go out and knock on doors and count people, that this didn't make any sense. And I said, if he thought that was such good politics, why was he on the other side of it? And he confessed that it was because he thought they would count fewer than were actually there, that the statistical sampling would give us larger numbers.

I don't thing this ought to be a political issue, not for us, not for them. We ought to try to find what is the most accurate way.

And of course, then these constitutional issues have been raised, but I can't believe that can't be dealt with.

Go ahead, John [John Roberts, CBS News].

White House E-Mail

Q. Sir, what's your response to Congressman Burton on the issue of these E-mails?

The President. Well, I just got the letter, and my understanding is that there will be a response to him, and that it will all be handled in an appropriate way. And I have referred all the questions to the Counsel's Office, but I think they will handle it just fine.

Yes, go ahead.

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit

Q. On prescription drugs, have you had any, in light of the principals here, have you had any conversation with the Republican leadership, either in the House or Senate, on this, and do you have any sense of how close you might be?

The President. I haven't talked to them in the last couple of weeks. But earlier, I did when we were getting the year started off. And I think that we might be able to do something. There is some interest there in doing something.

Now, some of the Republicans said they wanted to do a very limited program only for very low income seniors, and the problem for that, as I said, is that half the people that can't get coverage are above 150 percent of the poverty line. If you've got a substantial drug bill and you're 75 years old and you're living on $15,000, that's not all that much money.

Look, this is, again, this is like this gun issue. This is something that, if we want to get an agreement that moves the American people forward and makes this a more just and a more healthy society, we can get an agreement. Everybody wanted an agreement in '96 on welfare reform. We got it. We wanted an agreement on the minimum wage. We got it. We wanted an agreement on the balanced budget in '97, which had substantial tax cuts that benefited middle class American families, and we got it. If they want an agreement, we'll sit down, and we'll work through this, and we'll get an agreement. We can do this.

Q. Will the pressures of an election year work for or against getting something done on prescription drugs?

The President. I think, on balance, in favor, if we all work at it. That is—that's what I think. Do you agree with that? I'm not—see, I haven't given up on Medicare reform yet. I haven't given up on getting big things done here.

Minimum Wage Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you think that most Republicans who do vote for a higher minimum wage will do so confident in the knowledge that you would veto the bill, and that, in fact, they don't really want the higher minimum wage?

The President. First of all, I've always been reluctant in politics to evaluate other people's motives. I think you have to judge their actions and evaluate what they do. I think it's a very hazardous thing, talking about people's motives. But my belief is based on what I have heard said, is, I think some of them may be doing that, and some of them may really believe in both the weakening of worker protections that's in this bill and the shape and structure of their tax cut.

But I have to add up all these tax cuts they're passing, as well as evaluate them on the merits, and as I said, I can't allow one group of American working people to be pitted against another. I don't think a price for raising the minimum wage should be weakening worker protections for others in the work force.

So they may believe these things, but I don't, and I can't let it happen. I don't think it's right. And so if they believe in the minimum wage, the best thing to do is to send a straightforward minimum wage bill. If they want tax relief for small business, the best thing to do is sit down and negotiate with us, and we'll give it to them, but it will be at a more affordable level in a more targeted way. But it will be very helpful, generous, and positive. So I'd like to see that done.

But it's not just me—the Congress, the Democrats in Congress have offered a small business tax relief package that I thought was quite good and one that wouldn't undermine

our goal of paying the debt off and having the funds to save Social Security and Medicare.

Thank you.

Judicial Nomination

Q. Mr. President, do you have anything to say to Congress on the Paez vote?

The President. It's time, he's waited long enough. It's 4 years, and it must be a happy day for all of us. I hope that, and I believe, we have the votes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cheryl Costas, minimum wage earner; former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan; and Richard A. Paez, nominee, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. A portion of the exchange could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Native American Luncheon

March 9, 2000

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. I am delighted to be here today. It's wonderful to see many of you again, and some of you for the first time.

I want to thank Congressman Kennedy and Congressman Kildee for the work they have done to build bridges of cooperation and mutual effort with the tribes of our country. I want to thank Dick Gephardt for being a truly outstanding leader of our party in the House of Representatives.

You know, I'm not on the ballot this year. [*Laughter*] Most days, I'm okay with it. But when I vote, it will be along with a lot of other Americans, whom I believe will make him the next Speaker of the House of Representatives. And it will be a good thing for America when he is, because he's an outstanding man.

I want to thank all the other Members who have come here today to be with you to express their support: George Miller from California, a long time champion of tribal causes; Maxine Waters; Jim Maloney; and Carolyn Maloney.

And I want to thank Nancy Keenan from Montana for running. I knew Nancy Keenan before she ever thought she'd be running for Congress, and way before anybody, including my mother, thought I'd ever be President. So I am delighted to see her here as a candidate. I can tell you, she is, I think, one of the most outstanding candidates we have anywhere in the United States. And she will profoundly enrich the United States Congress if she is elected, as I firmly expect her to be. And she's over there, wearing her "Jeanette Rankin for Congress" button to remind the people of her fellow State, her fellow Montanans, that it's been too long since a woman represented Montana to Congress.

I thank Bobby Whitefeather for the invocation. It was very moving.

Some of you who have visited me in the Oval Office have seen that in front of—there are basically three windows behind the President's desk. And the one directly behind my desk, I have a table on which I keep military coins. And the one just to the right of that is filled with a drum, an Indian drum made by a tribe in the Southwest when we were debating the NAFTA treaty. And on the face of this drum, there is a Native American, a Native Canadian, and a Native Mexican. And then I have in the drums the eagle feathers I've received from various tribal leaders around the country and other gifts.

I now have a beautiful eagle-feather headdress I received just a couple of weeks ago and a pouch of tobacco which has great symbolic significance, as all of you know. I have a number of other things that I've collected from native peoples in other parts of the world to remind me that these challenges are present everywhere, a necklace made for me by a Native Hawaiian, a baobab nut carved for me by an Australian Aboriginal.

But I have kept the Native American present in the Oval Office from the beginning of my Presidency for over 7 years now to remind me of my solemn obligation to respect the nation-to-nation relationship that I have done everything I could to nurture, to build up, and to honor.

In my private office in the White House—and every President's got to private office on the second floor of the White House, a different room—I have things that mean a lot

to me, personally. I have an old, old painting of Benjamin Franklin, to remind me of the importance of enterprise and effort and ingenuity—in private, as well as public life. I have a picture of my friend Yitzhak Rabin, 10 days before he was killed. I have a picture of Robert Kennedy in Appalachia, to remind me of the obligations of the President to people who aren't so fortunate. And I have one of Edward Curtis' magnificent pictures; this one of a chief named Long Fox. And I look at it every night to remind me of my continuing obligation to keep working until we get this relationship right and until people who live in all of our Native American areas have a chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities, as well.

So it's a great honor for me to be here today. In 1994, I invited all the tribal leaders to come to the White House to meet me, and I learned it was the first time that had been done since James Monroe was President in 1822. And I was struck by the great good fortune that some tribes have found and by how wisely some of the tribes were investing the earnings that they were making from gaming enterprises. And I was struck that other leaders, literally, people in their tribes took a collection to make sure they could afford the plane ticket. And it reminded me again how very much we still have to do.

Now, we have, I think, a lot of hope in American today, but we also have a lot of work to do. That's the message I tried to get out at the State of the Union Address. One of the things that I've always loved about most of the wisest things I've read coming out of Native American tribes in every part of America is, there's this understanding of the fleeting nature of life and the intergenerational responsibilities we all have. And sometimes—about the only time Americans ever really get in trouble with out politics in this great democracy is when we're too focused on just this minute.

Sometimes if we happen to be mad, as you know, when people are really angry and they have to make a decision, they're more than 50 percent likely to do something wrong. If you're too obsessed with just this minute and you're really, really mad, you might make a mistake. And if you just look at this little slice of time and you're really, really complacent, you will also certainly make a mistake, because change is constant in human existence and human affairs and the life and times of a nation. So that's why I have tried to argue to the Congress and to our country that now is the time to meet the big challenges that America still faces.

And now is the time to meet the big challenges that Native Americans still face. For all the economic prosperity of some tribes, on some reservations the unemployment rate is still 70 percent. A third of American Indians and Alaska natives still live in poverty and without decent health care. Indians are the victims of twice as many violent crimes. More than 80 percent of the people in Indian country aren't yet connected to the Internet, something which can make a big difference, which is why I ordered some Christmas presents from the Lakota craftspeople at Pine Ridge over the Internet last Christmas, to try to emphasize this as an important thing. There are many people who have found ways to make a living because of the Internet, even though they're physically distant from the markets they must serve.

The dropout rate from high school of Native American children is still about one-third, and we've got it down; we got the graduation rate of the general population now up almost to 90 percent.

So we have to do something about this. That's why I wanted to highlight Indian country in my first new markets tour. I want to give Americans who have made money in this economy the same incentives to invest in the underdeveloped areas in America that we give them to invest in the underdeveloped areas of Latin America or Africa or Asia, not to encourage Americans to stay away from those places overseas but to look first to the people here at home who need work, who need education, who need technology, who need opportunity. And I think it's important.

I also asked in the State of the Union Address for the largest budget increase, nearly $1.2 billion, for new and existing programs to assist tribal nations, and many of you mentioned that. I think that's important. And I think it's important that we do have bipartisan support for this, for which I am very grateful—to increase economic opportunity, health care, education, law enforcement; to

more than double last year's funding to replace and repair schools on reservations, and to address the growing digital divide; to improve roads and bridges, public safety and health care; increase funding for law enforcement officers, and a substantial increase to the Indian health services. All this is very, very important.

I want to make three points. This is going to be a brief speech. Number one, I want you to help me pass the budget. It matters. And we do have some Republican support for it, which is good, and without it we can't pass it because we're still in the minority.

Number two, I want you to help me pass this new markets initiative. Ever since I've been President we have worked to try to empower the tribes of this country. As nearly as I can tell—I've spent a lot of time, since I was a little boy, when I used to go to the Garland County Library in Arkansas, and I'd sit there for hours on end reading history of the Native American tribe, I tried to figure out what happened and what went right and what went wrong. And basically, I remember once I read this great biography of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce. That was in grade school; I still remember. And he made that incredible statement, "From this day I will fight no more forever." It was a noble, powerful thing. I still remember it. I was 8 or 9 years old when I read it.

But you made that pledge, and you got a bad deal. You gave up your land and your mineral rights and all this, and the Government said that they would do certain things through the DIA to take care of you. And it's not good for people outside your own family and community to act like they're taking care of you. And besides that, usually people don't keep their word, because there's always something else they would rather spend the money on.

And so I say to you, I want this budget to pass. And it's important. But our real goal ought to be the fundamental empowerment of the Native American tribes in this country as envisioned by the Constitution, required by the Supreme Court. That is what I have worked for since the day I got here. And I want you to help me get as much done in the days I have left remaining to get this nation-to-nation relationship right in a way that will allow you all to be lifted up. It is about money but more than money.

The third thing I want to say is, because that's why we're here, this is a political event. The reason we don't fight in America, if you—in a way, we all, all of us citizens promised that we will fight no more forever—is that we have other ways of resolving our differences and pursuing our interests and manifesting our power.

But we have to show up at the ballot box to do it. And the truth is that while we will get some very good Republican support on this budget, and I'm grateful for that, and while there are some members of the other party in the Congress who have represented large numbers of you who have learned about this, and I'm grateful for them, our party has had a consistent, determined leadership position that goes from top to bottom throughout the entire United States Congress that we support the direction that you advocate. That's why you're here today. This is unprecedented. I am grateful for you for being here.

But this is about far more than financial contributions and money. This is about whether people will be organized and energized to go out and vote, to recognize that when you lay down your weapons, you have to pick up your ballot. That this is not about anybody being taken care of; this is about the right kind of relationship. And it has to be one that focuses on empowerment.

I have been profoundly honored, more than any of you can ever imagine, to have had the opportunity to work with you, to learn what I have learned, to see what I have seen. And I hope I have made a difference. And I am determined to do everything I can, in every day I have left, especially with this new markets initiative, which does have good bipartisan support. But in the end, think about this: The only way we'll ever get this right is if all of you are determined to be heard, determined to vote, determined to speak, determined to educate, determined to be heard, determined to make real what was supposed to happen so long ago and didn't. That's why I think it is so important that you're here today. Your presence here today and your statement increases dramatically the chances that, at last, we will get it right.

When I was down in Selma last weekend celebrating the 35th anniversary of the civil rights march, I was researching the things that various people had said, trying to get ready for it. And I noticed something Martin Luther King said about the end of the whole legacy of slavery. He said, you know, "When, finally, African-Americans are freed, the white people will be free, too." And as a white southerner, I identified with that. And it's literally true for me. If that hadn't happened in the South, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton never would have been elected President of the United States.

But America still labors under the burden of the terms that we struck with the Native American tribes so long ago and the fact that the deal never worked out in a way that was fair to both sides and honorable.

And in some ways, it was maybe doomed from the beginning to have problems. But now, we're trying to get it right, and we've made all this progress in the last few years. That's the importance of your being here today. I want you to feel good about this. And I want you to understand that the rest of us are getting a lot out of it.

This is the part of our historical legacy we want to be proud of, and it will never be right until we get it right. You just remember, every time you come to Washington, every time you lobby for something, every time you try to do something to empower your own people and to help them, you're doing something for the rest of us, too, because this is a country that's supposed to be founded on equal opportunity, equal justice, mutual respect, everybody having a chance. The belief that we all do better when we help each other. That's what this is all about.

So I hope you think I have done something for you. But believe me, I still remember the little boy I was in the library over 40 years ago. You've done a lot more for me, and I thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:23 p.m. in the Phoenix Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Bobby Whitefeather, chairman, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota.

Remarks to the One America Meeting With Religious Leaders

March 9, 2000

The President. Thank you. Well, first of all, welcome to the White House. Welcome to this wonderful East Room, where Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis planned the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore parts of America no one had ever seen, to try to find an ocean that no one thought could be reached by land. In a way, we are here on an even grander expedition, to try to find a place in the human heart no one has ever seen, that many believe we cannot reach in this life. And so I thank you all for coming.

Thank you, Sandy, for your passionate and vigorous leadership. Thank you, Ben Johnson, for telling me that you like your job every day. [*Laughter*] I was afraid that I had given you an impossible job; you would only hear from people who were disappointed in us and that you would quit on me. So I'm glad you're happy, and I appreciate you.

Thank you, Maria, for your leadership on this effort. And I want to thank the members of the administration who are here, who have been introduced. And Dr. Franklin and Judy Winston, thank you for being here. And I thank my good friend Congressman Amo Houghton for being here, for proving that this issue is not a partisan issue, and for being in Selma. Didn't we have a grand day Sunday? One of the great days of my life, and many of you were there.

I was thinking, when I was in Selma Sunday and we were walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, what an important role the faith community of that day had in the civil rights movement. And there was an elderly woman there who was 90 years old, who was telling me about a rabbi who came to march with them. And I think it was Rabbi Heschel, but I'm not sure because she didn't remember, but I think that's who it must be. And the rabbi had a very, very long beard, and she said, "You know, a lot of us thought God, himself, had come down to Earth to go with us."

I say that because even today contemporary surveys show that the American people look to the faith community to lead us

forward on this great journey. Some of you have a foot in both worlds, so to speak. I see my great friend Reverend and former Congressman Floyd Flake from New York out there. But all of you must have a foot in this world on this issue.

I also want to comment that if we had had a meeting like this 35 years ago in the White House, and it had been a very inclusive meeting, there would have been probably—probably—African-Americans and Hispanics here, and European-Americans, maybe some Native Americans, although we were pretty tone deaf about that back then, and maybe—maybe—one Asian-American. And all the faiths represented here would have been Christians and Jews, and maybe Native Americans.

Today we have a large number of Muslims; we have Buddhists here; we have Baha'i members here, and perhaps many other faiths. I say that that make this point. I think you can make a compelling argument that getting this right in the United States and putting us in a position to play a role of leadership in the world is not just a racial and ethnic issue anymore; it is also inevitably a religious issue.

If you look around the world where I have been so involved—take my people, the Irish—there's no ethnic difference; all the differences are religious. Or if you look at our continuing efforts in the Middle East, is that an ethnic conflict or a religious one? In our attempts to resolve the difficulties between Greece and Turkey and on the island of Cyprus, is that an ethnic conflict or a religious one? When you see the continuing efforts to resolve the future of Tibet and the role of the Dalai Lama, is that a religious conflict or an ethnic one?

I'm sure all of you have thought about this more than I have. The most dangerous place in the world today, I think you could argue, is the Indian subcontinent and the line of control in Kashmir. Is that an ethnic conflict or a religious one? So I think in order to understand this even and make this journey, we have to learn not only more about our ethnic and racial differences but our religious differences, how are we different, how are our world views different, how are they in common, how do we find a way through it all to reaffirm our common humanity.

We know that the three great monotheistic religions that grew out of the sturdy but difficult soil of the Middle East all say that we're supposed to love our neighbors as ourselves, that if we turn aside a stranger, it's as if we turn aside God, that we should not do to others what we would not like to have done to ourselves. And we know that, in various ways, all the faiths in this room, however they define man's understanding of the divine, at least recognize the fundamental importance on this Earth of our common humanity.

So I hope that we will be able to talk today about what you're going to do, but I hope beyond that, you will be thinking today about how more and more of this racial and ethnic diversity, both within America and beyond our borders, has an inevitable religious component, and therefore, how people of faith speak about it, behave about it, what their body language is even, will have a profound impact on how this whole thing plays out in 21st century America.

If you heard the State of the Union, you heard me tell the story about the evening we had in this very room that my wife sponsored to observe the millennium, where we had one of the founders of the Internet, the man who sent the first E-mail to his profoundly deaf wife 18 years ago, Vint Cerf, talking with Eric Lander, one of our human genome experts. And the beginning of their whole discussion was about how we could never have uncovered the mysteries of the human gene without the revolution in computers, because it made it mechanically, scientifically possible to deal with things that small and that diverse.

But in the end, Lander just said, almost in passing, he said, you know, we're all genetically 99.9 percent the same. And if you get an ethnic group together, the differences among individuals within the group will be greater than the differences between one group and another, between African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans. The differences within the groups, genetically, are greater than the group profile from one group to another. And when I said that, there was almost a groan in the Congress, you know, because the Republicans

and Democrats having to recognize they were 99.9 percent the same. [*Laughter*] It made them physically uncomfortable. You know, you could see that they were having real trouble dealing with this. And I think it made them understand how others have real trouble dealing with it.

But I think—one of the things I think is most interesting is how the advances of science sooner or later seem to confirm the teaching of ancient faiths, the teaching of people who maybe counted with an abacus and wrote in a language now long dead or had no writing at all. This is worth remembering.

So I wanted to make this point to you. I mean, America would have never had any of its great movements for social justice had it not been for leaders of faith—none of them. And the same can be said of many other nations as well. But as we grow more diverse, our opportunity to do good around the world is even greater if we can be good here at home.

But I would argue to you, we will not be able to do it unless we understand that this whole diversity, more than ever before, is not like bringing the preachers and the priests, and the rabbis to help heal the soul of the sinful races. Now it's caught up in our entire world view and this multiplicity of faiths we now have in America. And we need to take this whole effort to a different level. And that's why I ask for your help—to begin with, understanding. It's hard to understand this, if you've never lived in a culture different from your own.

So, I've already talked a little more than I meant to, but I wanted you to be thinking about that because I think—you know, none of you are term-limited, except by the Almighty. [*Laughter*] And so you will be around here doing these kinds of things, presumably, when I am no longer President. But I will predict to you that the work of building one America and dealing with this diversity will more and more require a deeper understanding of the diversity of faiths, and the understanding of the relationship between human nature and the divine, and how it's articulated and played out in life than it ever has before to this day. Which means your role will be even more important in the new century than it was in the pivotal struggles of our Nation's past.

Thank you very much.

[*At this point, the discussion began.*]

The President. I would like to say two things very briefly, because I want to hear more from you.

First of all, I do think this whole issue of economic equity and empowerment is important. And I believe there are two elements to that: One is, are people who are poor being given enough support from their Government and from their religious institutions; the other, that I think is the far more important question—and one to which Mr. Flake, among others, has done so much—are we doing enough to empower the poor to support themselves and to take a different path to the future. And that is what this whole new markets effort we're making this year is designed to do. So I hope you'll be involved in that.

Let me just say about the Diallo case, I tried to think of something to say which would be true, relevant, and wouldn't put us all in the position of second-guessing the jury. That is, we didn't—or looking into the hearts and minds of those police officers. That is, we didn't sit there; we didn't hear the evidence. Four African-Americans did, among others. So let's posit. The jury rendered a verdict, and it is the verdict. But the larger fact is that we all have the feeling, I think, that it probably wouldn't have happened, as I said, if it had been a white young man in a white neighborhood under the same facts.

And so the real issue here—and again, we're getting more diverse now, more racially diverse, and another thing, linguistically, we're getting much more diverse. So you're going to have people in neighborhoods that can't even communicate in tense situations with the people whose job it is to enforce the law.

Keep in mind, this also puts more pressure on the police. A lot of them believe that it's not the color of their skin; it's the color of their uniform that causes them to be distrusted and to feel like aliens. So when they

get treated that way, then they feel more endangered and more threatened, and they're more likely, then, to do something.

So one of the things—I didn't say this earlier, but one of the things that I hope will come out of the Diallo case, if you looked at the powerful image his mother has made—she's been quite a grand person, I think, the way she has tried to free herself of what any parent would feel, to go to the larger issues. I just hope that one of the things we can all do, coming out of this, is not only to make sure that the police forces in our diverse communities are themselves properly diverse. That's important, but that's not all there is to it, because you're never going to be having a time when there won't be, let's say, black police officers who have to arrest Hispanics and Asian police officers have to arrest white people or, you know, whatever it is. There's never going to be a time when you're going to have total racial homogeneity between the police and the communities they're working. So I hope that we can come out of this so that within a period of time, a reasonable period of time, you could all stand up and say, "Whatever happens, I don't believe it would have happened differently if the police and the person involved had, themselves, been of a different race."

That's what I want you to be able to say. That's the big issue here. I wish I could bring that boy back for his mother and his friends, to give him the life he should have had. But I can't do that. You can't do that. And we can't be in a position where we second-guess a jury that sat there and, I believe, honestly made their best judgment. And we didn't hear all those facts. But we do know the larger truth, and that's what I hope will come out of this, a real determination—and a lot of you can have an impact on this in your communities, to bring the police and the community together. And role-play this. This is a matter of training as well as tone. It's a matter of disciplined work as well as the heart.

You know, you'd never think about sending a police force out unless they've trained in how to use their guns, unless they knew how to put on their bulletproof vests, unless they knew how to give someone their Miranda warnings, unless they knew these things. You have to train for this. This is not just a matter of having a good heart. This is work. This is discipline.

How many times have you had to remind yourself of that in your own work? Not just enough to have good intentions, you've got to train and work for this.

I've talked more about this than I meant to, but this is a big deal. We'll never get this race issue right unless we get the police-community relations issue right. And most of these police officers—listen, they get up every day; they put on those uniforms; and they've got their lives on the line; and they—most of them really do try to do the right thing, in a decent way and an honorable way. And we shouldn't lose sight of that. And we've got to train for this so that we don't have these Diallo-type cases again.

Yes, sir. I promise to call on you in the back.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Thank you. Let me be very brief here. Number one, we have this national effort to reduce violence against children, especially in the schools. And we've got a lot of things going; it's a subject for another moment. If you would like to be involved in it, if any of you would like to be involved in it, if you would give to Ben or Maria a card or address or something, we'll get you involved. We've got a lot of things going on here, because there is much more we can do.

Secondly, on the perception of the United States around the world, first of all, I think sometimes people think we can do more than we can, which, when we don't do it, therefore, gives us a negative perception. And then sometimes, we try to do things, that if we do it in the wrong way, we're seen as being arrogant or high-handed. And then, we are having our own debates in this country, which you saw in the debate in the Senate over the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, for example, about what the role of the United States and the world should be.

So I think that some of this misperception is inevitable. But one of the reasons I'm about to go to the Indian subcontinent is that I want to try to minimize—if people are mad

at us, at least I want them to have an accurate perception. [*Laughter*] If they think we have a certain policy or a certain attitude, I want them to have an accurate view of what that policy or attitude is. And it's a constant effort, but I appreciate that.

I wonder if—I promised this gentleman in the back I'd call on him, but we have some people here from different religious traditions, from East Asia or South Asia who have not spoken. I wonder if any of them would like to be heard before we go.

Go ahead, sir.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. First of all, I strongly support what was done in South Africa. And I have tried on various occasions to do that for the Japanese who were interned here during the war, for the African-Americans that were subject to the Tuskegee experiments. And I wish you would work with our people, and let's try to give some shape to what your thinking is.

I do believe that it's—I was thrilled that you mentioned that old debate between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, because when people look at John Adams, they sort of have this preconceived notion of what he was like and what Jefferson was like. You would think that Jefferson was arguing for passion, and Adams was arguing for reason. And it was actually the other way around, which is maybe just their own form of denial, who knows? [*Laughter*]

But anyway, it was a great debate. And I agree that this is fundamentally a problem of the heart.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Thank you. Let me say, I want to have a chance to greet you all individually, so we're going to have to break up. I do want to say, Bishop, that I don't believe I'll ever forget that remark that without followers, a leader is just a person out on a walk. [*Laughter*] Without you and some of our friends of the last couple years, I would have been taking a lot of walks. [*Laughter*] So I thank you for that.

I want to end this on a high note, if I might, since we're here talking about one America. After a 4-year wait, Judge Richard Paez, a Hispanic judge from California, of the Mormon faith, and Marsha Berzon were confirmed by the United States Senate today.

They got the highest rating by the American Bar Association, and they added to the diversity of the bench. This week Judge Julio Fuentes of New Jersey was also confirmed. So I think maybe we're, by fits and starts, moving toward our one America. And we will work with you more.

I look forward to seeing you all individually. Thank you very much.

Oh, wait. We've got to have a benediction, and this is my fault. Tell them to stop the music. [*Laughter*]

Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste. I would like to have Jake Swamp from the Mohawks lead us in closing prayer.

The President. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sanford Cloud, Jr., president and chief executive officer, National Conference for Community and Justice; John Hope Franklin, former Chair, and Judith A. Winston, former Executive Director and member, President's Initiative on Race; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; Eric Lander, director, Whitehead/MIT Center for Genome Research; and Bishop Chandler Owens, Church of God in Christ. The President also referred to West African immigrant Amadou Diallo, who died after being shot in the Bronx Borough of New York City by four police officers, who were acquitted of all criminal charges on February 25 in Albany, NY. Ms. Echaveste referred to Jake Swamp, founder, Tree of Peace Society. The conference was formally entitled, "The President's One America Meeting With Religious Leaders."

Statement on the Treasury Department's Debt Buyback

March 9, 2000

Today we reached another historic landmark in our fiscal turnaround. For the first time in 70 years, the U.S. Treasury Department completed a "debt buyback." This buyback of debt is a striking reminder of the extraordinary progress we have made in putting America's fiscal house in order. In the last 7 years, we moved from the largest deficit in history to the largest surplus in history.

America is now on track to pay down nearly $300 billion in debt by the end of this year and to be debt-free by 2013. In this new era of surpluses, these "debt buybacks" will help us continue to pay down the debt, save money for American taxpayers, and lift the burden of interest payments off our children and grandchildren.

Statement on Senate Action on Judicial Nominations

March 9, 2000

Today the Senate finally confirmed, after 4 years, Judge Richard Paez and, after 2 years, Marsha Berzon to the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Both of these candidates bring extraordinary experience and diversity to the bench, both received the American Bar Association's highest rating, both were approved by solid bipartisan majorities today, but unfortunately both were forced to wait far too long to receive votes.

This week the Senate also confirmed Judge Julio Fuentes of New Jersey, who becomes the first Hispanic to serve on the Third Circuit. Judge Fuentes had to wait a year for his vote, but when it finally came, he was approved unanimously by a vote of 93 to 0.

I want to thank the Senate for moving this process forward. But I want to repeat that dozens of qualified judicial nominees still await confirmation. Meanwhile, caseloads rise and backlogs mount. These fine Americans have offered themselves to serve our country—and they are entitled to an up or down vote. Election year politics should not be used as an excuse to slow down the confirmation process.

This is a good day for our country. But we must keep going. It's what our nominees deserve and what justice demands.

Statement on Minimum Wage Legislation

March 9, 2000

The minimum wage must be raised but not with a bill that stacks the deck against America's working families. This bill repeals key overtime protections, could reduce pension coverage for many families, and includes risky tax giveaways that threaten our prosperity and the future of Social Security and Medicare. Once again, Republicans in the House of Representatives have demonstrated that they would rather fight for special interests than give working families the raise they deserve.

I will veto the bill Republicans in the House passed tonight if it comes to my desk. Congress should send me a bill I can sign: a clean straightforward bill that raises the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Federal Advisory Committees

March 9, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As provided by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (Public Law 92–463; 5 U.S.C., App. 2, 6(c)), I hereby submit the *Twenty-seventh Annual Report on Federal Advisory Committees*, covering fiscal year 1998.

In keeping with my commitment to create a more responsive government, the executive branch continues to implement my policy of maintaining the number of advisory committees within the ceiling of 534 required by Executive Order 12838 of February 10, 1993. Accordingly, the number of discretionary advisory committees (established under general congressional authorizations) was again held to substantially below that number. During fiscal year 1998, 460 discretionary committees advised executive branch officials. The number of discretionary committees supported represents a 43 percent reduction in the 801 in existence at the beginning of my Administration.

Through the planning process required by Executive Order 12838, the total number of advisory committees specifically mandated by statute also continues to decline. The 388 such groups supported at the end of fiscal year 1998 represents a modest decrease from the 391 in existence at the end of fiscal year 1997. However, compared to the 439 advisory committees mandated by statute at the

beginning of my Administration, the net total for fiscal year 1998 reflects nearly a 12 percent decrease since 1993.

The executive branch has worked jointly with the Congress to establish a partnership whereby all advisory committees that are required by statute are regularly reviewed through the legislative reauthorization process and that any such new committees proposed through legislation are closely linked to compelling national interests. Furthermore, my Administration will continue to direct the estimated costs to fund required statutory groups in fiscal year 1999, or $45.8 million, toward supporting initiatives that reflect the highest priority public involvement efforts.

Combined savings achieved through actions taken during fiscal year 1998 to eliminate all advisory committees that are no longer needed, or that have completed their missions, totaled $7.6 million. This reflects the termination of 47 committees, originally established under both congressional authorities or implemented by executive agency decisions. Agencies will continue to review and eliminate advisory committees that are obsolete, duplicative, or of a lesser priority than those that would serve a well-defined national interest. New committees will be established only when they are essential to the conduct of necessary business, are clearly in the public's best interests, and when they serve to enhance Federal decisionmaking through an open and collaborative process with the American people.

I urge the Congress to work closely with the General Services Administration and each department and agency to examine additional opportunities for strengthening the contributions made by Federal advisory committees.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 9, 2000.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring Governor Mel Carnahan

March 9, 2000

Well, thank you very much. Let me begin by thanking Smith and Elizabeth for having us into this magnificent, beautiful place, for the Democrats again and specifically for Mel Carnahan; and for being such good friends and for being willing to be called Smith Barney and Bailey Smith and other names. [*Laughter*] I'm sure there's a reward for you in heaven for enduring those slings and arrows.

I want to thank the other Senators who have come here to express their support for you. I see Senator Boxer back there, Senator Murray, and Senator Cleland. I think Senator Harkin is here. There he is. And Senator Wellstone and Senator Daschle were here. I don't know if they're still here or not. But this is quite an outstanding turnout of your prospective colleagues.

I also want all of you to know that I have a different take on this than everybody—this race—than everybody here who is not from Missouri, because Mel and Jean Carnahan have been friends of mine for along time. Robin has worked with me, and their children I've had a chance to know. I want you to know that you did a good thing tonight, contributing to his campaign, because he was a great Governor and because he's a good man and a good friend and because he'll be a good Senator.

I'm for him in part because when only my mother thought I could be elected President in 1991—and my wife, as she never lets me forget—[*laughter*]—Mel Carnahan was a Lieutenant Governor involved in a very difficult primary for Governor. He had all he could say grace over, and he still endorsed me for President in the Missouri primary. It was a brave and good thing to do, and I'll never forget it.

And I was the Governor of Arkansas. Missouri is my neighbor. I was raised idolizing Harry Truman. When I was a young man here in the Senate, I worked for Senator Fulbright and got to watch Stuart Simington up close. And I may be the only person here who's actually known Senator Ashcroft for

more than 20 years, besides Mel. We served together as attorney general and as Governor, and we always had a very cordial, personal relationship.

But I can tell you that he actually believes all those things that the Republicans say. [*Laughter*] And I say that not to make you laugh but to say, you know, one of the things I don't like in a lot of these campaigns is, we get into all this name-calling and demonization. We act like, you know, what's really bad about our opponents is, they're doing these bad things, and they don't really believe them. That's not true about him. [*Laughter*]

We can laugh about this, but that's what they think about us. They think we're always playing to some crowd or another. And I think it's important to point out that most of us on both sides actually believe in what we're doing. And that's what makes the political system work. It's what gives the political system integrity. The main reason that I want to see campaign finance reform, since I'm not a candidate for anything anymore, and the main reason I really respect Smith, because, you know, if we have campaign finance reform, it'll cost him a little less money, but then he'll have to open his home and have evenings where we actually debate the issues, instead of hustle you for money. [*Laughter*]

But the major reason we need to reform the campaign finance system, in my judgment, is that it's almost all the money goes to voter communication, and it's wrong to have unequal levels of voter communication. The people need to hear a full debate on both sides and have a full ability to evaluate the personalities of candidates on all sides in order to make good decisions. And the second main reason we need it is that the people in office and the people who want to get in office have to spend too much time raising money, and they're exhausted all the time, and they don't have enough time to read and think and talk to other people.

I would say the third reason you need it is the reason all the press says, which is, you know, the corrupting influence of big money. The truth is that over 90 percent of the time—way over 90 percent of the time—the people in both parties in the Senate and in the House vote their convictions. And way over 90 percent of the time the people that give you money never ask you for anything, except to keep in touch with them and discuss the issues and talk about things and listen to them if they've got something on their minds.

Anyway, to get back to the point I was making, I know both these men. And I don't have to demonize John Ashcroft. When we were young men together, we worked as attorney general together; we worked as Governor. I had a very cordial relationship with him. But he believes in how he's voted in the Senate, and I don't. And we should stop pretending that it doesn't make any difference who wins, or that it's all some game dominated by who gives money and all that. That's not true.

There are two great philosophical differences of opinion today, battling their way through Washington. They won in the elections of '94. We won when we beat the contract on America. The people ratified our decision in '96. We got together briefly in the welfare reform bill and in the Balanced Budget Act of '97. Then our approach was ratified in the '98 election. And then we won again when I vetoed their huge tax bill in '99, which would have undermined our ability to save Social Security and Medicare, balance the budget, pay off the debt, and keep investing in our future.

But we have now had—we've got an ongoing debate here about what kind of country we're going to be, what our responsibilities to each other are, and where we're going. Now, I know this man very well, Carnahan. I know him very well. We worked together for years. I went to Missouri more than any other State when we were promoting welfare reform because he did the best job of any Governor in America in requiring people who were able-bodied to get training and to go into the workplace and getting big businesses to help him but, also, caring about the welfare of poor people, to make sure that the children had health care and the people had a decent place to live and the child care was there and the transportation was there. He did it right. And if he's in the Senate, he will do it right. This is a very important thing.

I can also tell you that for Democrats, because we believe in activist Government, it's very important that we keep a certain number of innovative Governors coming into the U.S. Senate all the time, because they understand how this stuff works. And it's important that you have people from our part of the country elected to the Senate, so that we can defend it when we have to take tough votes on sensible gun safety measures, for example.

It's not a hard vote for people who have no significant rural voters, no significant percentage for getting the NRA mailings all the time. It'll be a hard vote for him. And he'll take it, and he'll do the right thing, but then he'll know how to defend it, which is very, very important.

So all these Senate races are very important this year. All these House races are important. But I want those of you who don't know Mel Carnahan to know you have an extraordinary opportunity here. I know this guy. He is a good man. He is a great friend. He was there with me when I was practically all alone and running fifth in the pools in New Hampshire. You want somebody that will stay hitched in the tough times and take a decision when it's not self-evidently the right thing to do.

He has been a fabulous Governor, and you heard him reel off the issues. I just want you to know this is a huge deal. These judicial votes today were just one example. Senator Ashcroft voted to kill the African-American State Supreme Court judge in Missouri, Ronnie White and, I believe, did not fairly represent his position as a judge on criminal justice issues.

But there is an honest division here. You don't have to hate anybody to take the other one's part. But of all the races we've got going, where we're trying to elect a new person to the Senate, this guy has a unique ability to make a contribution to the Senate, to the policies and the politics of the Senate that no one else does.

You did a good thing in coming here. I hope you'll ask other people to give to his campaign. I think he's going to win, and all of us need to do whatever we can to help him.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Smith and Elizabeth Bagley, dinner hosts; Jean Carnahan, wife of Gov. Mel Carnahan and their daughter, Robin. Mel Carnahan is a candidate for the U.S. Senate in Missouri.

Remarks Announcing the Initiative To Reduce Air Travel Delays

March 10, 2000

Thank you very much. I want to thank Secretary Slater and Jane Garvey and the airline executives who are here, the representatives of the airline pilots, the air traffic controllers, and the other aviation leaders who have made a truly remarkable team for this announcement.

Minimum Wages Legislation

Before I talk about the air travel issue, because this is my only opportunity to meet with the press today, and because I had the unusual good fortune of letting them parade in ahead of us, here—I actually tried to get Mark Knoller [CBS Radio] to do this announcement, but he refused. [*Laughter*]

I want to say a few words about a very down-to-Earth issue, the proposal to raise the minimum wage. I have called for a simple one dollar increase in the minimum wage to help millions of families. Last night, dozens of Republicans joined us in forming a majority to raise the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years.

But unfortunately, the leadership turned that commonsense act into a dead letter by insisting they would only have a minimum wage increase if we turn back overtime protections for over a million workers and use the bill to give a large tax cut, which both disproportionately benefits the wealthiest Americans and would put our prosperity at risk by making it impossible for us to continue to pay down the debt and to save Social Security and Medicare.

Now, I think the American people question why Congress can't do something as simple as raising the minimum wage without loading it up with special favors. And I think it's a good question. The right answer is to send me a clean bill, a bill simple and clear, that could fit on one side of one piece of

paper. In fact, if you look at it, that's exactly what our minimum wage bill does. It's not very big, not very complicated. And I hope that we can pass it.

I'm looking forward to working with the Congress. I have not given up on this, and I have been given some encouraging signals that we might yet be able to reach an agreement. So I will keep working on it.

Air Travel Delays

Now, let me again welcome all the representatives of the transportation industry here. And let me say a special word of appreciation to Senator Jay Rockefeller for his longstanding leadership in this area and his interest. I think it's quite important that we have airline efficiency, because it's almost impossible for someone as tall as Senator Rockefeller to be comfortable on an airline—[*laughter*]—and we want to make sure he can at least always be on time. [*Laughter*] He has worked on this for a long time.

You mentioned, Secretary Slater mentioned the meeting we had in Everett, Washington. When I took office, the airline industry was in trouble. We've all worked very hard for the successes of the last 7 years, and all the actors in the industry have.

I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation to someone who is not here, Vice President Gore, who headed our Commission on Airline Safety and Security. It was part of our reinventing Government effort, and I thank him for his efforts, and all the people who worked on that endeavor.

We know that delays pile up as flights increase and thunderstorms snarl the skies. We know, with springtime coming, that we don't want to forget, as Rodney said, that last year's summer storms were the worst, or some of the worst, on record. The air traffic control system couldn't respond fast enough. More than 1,200 aircraft were late every day last summer. Delays rose by 22 percent last year overall. It's not good for travelers; it's not good for the airline industry; and it's not good for the overall economy.

Of course, when it comes to air travel, safety is the most important thing. In severe weather, flights will be canceled or delayed for safety reasons, and passengers wouldn't have it any other way. But as we work to keep the travel as safe as it can be, we should also do everything we can to make it as efficient as it can be.

After last summer's record delays, the Federal Aviation Administration put together an extraordinary partnership—with the airline industry, the pilots, the workers who keep the planes in the air, the air traffic controllers who bring them home safe. Together, they developed a faster, more efficient response to storms. And they came here today to brief me on the improvements we can all expect this summer.

First, better communications will let pilots and passengers know promptly whether they can expect a delay measured in minutes or in hours. Second, centralized air traffic decisionmaking will let us respond better to the really big storms that can stretch the length of the east coast or from Houston to the Great Lakes. Third, new technology will help FAA and airline experts use airspace more efficiently, detect storms sooner, and keep runways working even in bad weather. Fourth, FAA and airline representatives will share information several times a day, working off the same state-or-the-art weather forecast. And finally, next month the FAA will open a web site with up-to-the-minute weather information for consumers.

I want to thank all the organizations represented here for working together. And I thank all the Members of Congress who have supported these reforms. Let me also mention that Congress is close to finalizing the FAA reauthorization bill. I know it's important to Secretary Slater, because he sent me a memo about it yesterday. [*Laughter*] This will provide ample funding to upgrade facilities and equipment at airports and air traffic control centers. If we want to minimize delays and maximize safety, we need this FAA reauthorization and this funding. I think everybody here who's done a lot of air travel knows that we need to upgrade the facilities and the equipment and the air traffic control centers.

But I am concerned that too little funding will be available for air traffic control operations. That's the bedrock of efficiency and safety. And although the bill contains some first steps forward, it doesn't go far enough toward the system-wide reform we need.

We must bring the air traffic control system and the way it's managed into the 21st century. We have the safest air travel in the world, but as more and more Americans take to the air, we need to make our system as efficient as it safe. The FAA expects passenger traffic to rise by more than 50 percent in the next 10 years. Freight traffic will almost double in the same period. Busier skies means we have to work harder to keep our skies safe and to keep planes flying on time.

So today I'm directing the FAA to develop a plan for broader reform of the air traffic control system and to report back to me in 45 days, building from fundamental principles. America's 21st century air traffic control system should provide 21st century high-tech service. The system must work better with its customers, the commercial airlines, and others who pay for the system. It must be able to look beyond next year's budget cycle and fund new technology we need over a multi-year period.

We must meet these challenges in a way that helps, not harms, everyone who is a part of the air traffic control system. And we must always keep safety at the top of our agenda. With other Government agencies and the private sector, I ask the FAA to look ahead to our ultimate goal, putting together a seamless, state-of-the-art system from coast to coast.

Now, until we work out a way to get Mother Nature to cooperate, storms, delays, and cancellations will always be with us. And the American people understand that. But they also understand that if we can photograph and analyze weather patterns from space, we ought to be able to tell passengers why they're delayed and for how long. If we can guide the space shuttle into orbit and back, we ought to be able to guide planes around thunderstorms safely.

We can do a better job. Starting next summer, with the help of everyone here today, we will. Again, let me say, Secretary Slater and to Jane Garvey and to all the people standing with me and all of you sitting out in the audience who had anything to do with this, this is the way our country ought to work in a lot of other contexts. I thank you for what you have done. I think we have to do more. But this summer a lot of people will benefit from the enormous efforts you have made, and I am very, very grateful.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Statement on the United Negro College Fund's Technology Enhancement Capital Campaign

March 10, 2000

Today the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) announced the creation of its Technology Enhancement Capital Campaign, a technology initiative that will bring digital opportunity to historically black colleges across the Nation. Through a $50 million contribution by Microsoft and key commitments from IBM and AT&T, UNCF will help empower students, faculty, and staff at all 39 UNCF member colleges by strengthening technology infrastructure and improving computer access. I applaud the creation of this partnership and strongly support the efforts behind it.

While computer and Internet access has exploded in recent years, America continues to face a "digital divide"—a gap between those who have access to information age tools and the skills to use them and those who don't. We cannot allow unequal access to deepen divisions along the lines of race, income, education level, and geography. I believe we can use technology to help make the American dream a reality for more citizens, and that is why I have made the effort to bring digital opportunity to all Americans a top administration priority.

My administration is committed to doing its part to ensure that all Americans benefit from opportunities created by information technology. But the Government can not and should not do this alone. That is why I will lead a new markets trip the week of April 9th—designed to mobilize significant private and public efforts to close the digital divide. Efforts like the Technology Enhancement Capital Campaign are inspiring examples of what can be done in partnership to meet this important goal.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 4

In the evening, the President traveled from Palo Alto, CA, to Los Angeles, CA. Later, he traveled to Beverly Hills, CA.

March 5

In the morning, the President traveled to Selma, AL, and in the evening, he traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

March 6

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald Arthur Mahley for rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Negotiator for Chemical and Biological Arms Control Issues.

March 7

In the evening, the President was joined by friends and Members of Congress in the Family Theater at the White House to watch the Super Tuesday primary returns.

The President announced his intention to nominate Douglas Dworkin to be General Counsel at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Rudy de Leon to be Deputy Secretary at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ronald D. Sugar as a member of the National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint John E. Neece as a member of the Community Adjustment and Investment Program Advisory Committee.

The President declared a major disaster in Ohio and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on February 18 and continuing through March 2.

The White House announced that the President will visit Pakistan as part of his upcoming visit to South Asia.

March 9

The President announced his intention to nominate Madelyn R. Creedon to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration at the Department of Energy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Stephen C. Duffy as a member of the National Cancer Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint John J. Larivee, Jackie Rowe-Adams, and Michael Taylor as members of the Parents Advisory Council on Youth Drug Abuse.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Teresa Ghilarducci as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

March 10

The President announced his intention to nominate Marc Grossman to be Director General of the Foreign Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate William A. Eaton to be Assistant Secretary for Administration at the Department of State.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 9

Madelyn R. Creedon,
of Indiana, to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration (new position).

S. David Fineman,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Norma Levy Shapiro, retired.

Mary A. McLaughlin,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Marvin Katz, retired.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released March 7

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Pakistan

Released March 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released March 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of the nominations for U.S. District Judges for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Released March 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.