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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, April 7, 2000

Proclamation 7285—National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2000

March 31, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Children are our link to the future and our hope for a better tomorrow. Within a few short years, we will look to today's children for the vision, strength, creativity, and leadership to guide our Nation through the challenges of this new century. If they are to grow into healthy, happy adults and responsible citizens, we must provide our children with the love, nurturing, and protection they need and deserve.

However, many of America's children are not safe, even in their own homes. The statistics are staggering. Every year, there are nearly one million reported incidents of child abuse; and even more disturbing, more than 2,000 of these incidents result in the child's death. Whether suffering neglect, harsh physical punishment, sexual abuse, or psychological trauma, the children who survive will carry the scars of their abuse for the rest of their lives.

We now know that there are a variety of risk factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect—including parental substance abuse, lack of parenting skills and knowledge, domestic violence, or extreme stress—and there are practical measures and programs we can use to mitigate such factors. Social service providers can offer substance abuse programs for adults with children; schools can offer educational programs to teach parenting skills to teen mothers or instruct children on how to protect themselves from sexual predators; faith organizations can offer respite care for parents of children with special needs; and employers can introduce family-friendly policies, from child care to parental leave to flexible work schedules, to reduce the stress on working families.

Keeping children safe is a community responsibility, and prevention must be a community task. Every segment of society must be involved, including health and law enforcement professionals, schools, businesses, the media, government agencies, community and faith organizations, and especially parents themselves. Teachers and physicians need to recognize the symptoms of child abuse; parents need to ask for help in overcoming addictions or controlling violent behavior; communities must be willing to fund programs and services to protect children from abuse; and the media needs to raise public awareness of the availability of those programs and services.

My Administration is committed to doing its part to ensure the health and well-being of all our Nation's children. We have worked to increase funding at the State level for child protection programs and family preservation services. Working with the Congress, we have enacted the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and the Adoption and Safe Families Act, and we have established the Safe and Stable Families Program. Just a few weeks ago, I signed into law the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act, which gives State and local officials greater flexibility in using Department of Justice grant programs to prevent child abuse and neglect. This new legislation will increase funding to enforce child abuse and neglect laws, to enhance the investigation of child abuse and neglect crimes, and to promote programs to prevent such abuse and neglect. Through these and other measures, we continue our efforts to create a society where every child is cherished and no child bears the lasting scars of abuse or neglect.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United

States, do hereby proclaim April 2000 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by demonstrating our gratitude to those who work to keep our children safe, and by taking action in our own communities to make them healthy places where children can grow and thrive.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first 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., April 4, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on House Inaction on Extending the Energy Policy and Conservation Act

March 31, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker:

While the U.S. economy is the strongest it has ever been and inflation and unemployment remain at historically low levels, high oil prices have caused concern for many Americans. As a short-term measure, my Administration urged oil-producing nations to take steps to narrow the gap between worldwide production and consumption of crude oil in order to preserve sustained worldwide economic growth. Our focused diplomatic efforts helped produce tangible commitments by oil-producing nations to increase production to more appropriate levels that reflect current demand in the global economy.

While my Administration has worked hard to increase the supply of oil on the market, the House has failed to take one of the most critical steps necessary to maintain America's energy security—an extension of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), which includes authority to operate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), authority that expires today. The option to use the SPR is an essential line of defense against an interruption in oil supplies. Although the Senate passed a four-year straight reauthorization of EPCA, the House has failed to act. It is critical that the House reauthorize EPCA immediately to ensure that the United States maintains its ability to use all available tools to respond to the needs of the U.S. economy.

In addition, Congress should address other energy measures. Congress should pass my comprehensive tax package, which includes new tax incentives for domestic oil producers to reduce U.S. reliance on oil imports, as well as other incentives to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy that Congress has failed to enact. Congress should also fully fund the more than $1.4 billion that I have requested in my fiscal year 2001 Budget and 2000 Supplemental to promote energy security through the use of domestic energy technologies, including more efficient homes and buildings, a new generation of more efficient vehicles, renewable energy sources, and natural gas.

Finally, I have proposed the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast to reduce the likelihood of future heating oil shortages. Congress should authorize a reserve with an appropriate trigger to release heating oil to the market in the event of a supply shortage. I have directed the Department of Energy to begin the appropriate environmental reviews of the proposal to determine the correct approach to creating this reserve.

These critical steps will strengthen the sound, comprehensive energy strategy that has helped sustain the longest economic expansion in American history. They will enhance America's energy security, create jobs, protect the environment, and produce long-term savings for consumers. Congress should waste no more time in enacting these measures into law.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

The President's Radio Address
April 1, 2000

Good morning. Today I want to speak with you about an opportunity to shape the future of our country, and a responsibility we all have to make our voices count. I want to talk about this year's census and the importance of filling out and sending in your census form right away.

The Constitution mandates that our Nation conduct a census every 10 years. The first was taken back in 1790 and was directed by Thomas Jefferson when he served as Secretary of State. Every decade since then, the census has helped tell the story of America—who we are and what we're becoming.

Census 2000 is our chance to write the latest chapter in the unfolding epoch of America. Even though the census is taken only once in a decade, it has an impact on our lives every day. A report I'm releasing today by the Council of Economic Advisers shows just how much we need the census.

We need the census to help decide how almost $200 billion in Federal funds will be invested in States and communities. We need the census to draw legislative district lines and allocate seats for each State in the U.S. House of Representatives. We need the census to help our hometowns determine where to build everything from roads to schools to hospitals to child care centers. And we need the census to help businesses make decisions about where to invest and help individuals make informed decisions about where to buy a home or take a job.

For all of these reasons, it's important to make sure the first census of the 21st century is fair, accurate, and complete. After all, if we want to make good decisions about where we need to go as a nation, we first have to know where we are.

In the last census, we didn't know where more than 8 million people were. They were left uncounted. Many of them were children, minorities, and low income families. When people are uncounted, their voices are unheard in the Halls of Congress and in their own communities.

Those who suggest that filling out your census form isn't essential are plainly wrong. An inaccurate census distorts our understanding of a community's needs, denies people their fair share of resources, and diminishes the quality of life not only for them but for all of us. If we believe everybody in our American community counts, we simply must make sure everyone is counted.

That's an enormous undertaking. This year's census represents the largest peacetime mobilization in American history, involving hundreds of thousands of local census takers and community volunteers. But the most important person in the process is you.

I want to thank the millions of Americans who have sent in their forms. As of today, we're halfway there. But we must do better. We need the most accurate picture of America in the dawn of the 21st century.

So today I'm issuing a proclamation declaring this Census Day and urging all Americans to take a little time this weekend to fill out and send in your form. I've also issued a memorandum to all Federal employees urging them to do the same. Having completed our census form, I can tell you it only takes a few moments.

You can also fill out your census form online, as the Vice President did just recently. The on-line form can be found at www.2000.census.gov. It won't take long. The short form is the shortest since 1820. The long form is the shortest in history. And every question on both forms was reviewed by Congress 2 years ago.

But more important, information from the long form is critical for everything from helping communities design mass transit systems to providing 911 emergency services. It also helps us calculate cost of living increases for Social Security, military retirement, and veterans' pensions.

I know Americans are concerned about their privacy, and that's why I also want to stress that the information you provide is strictly, absolutely confidential. Individual information will not be available to anyone outside the Census Bureau for any reason.

So whether you have a long or a short form, please fill it out completely and send it in promptly. America is counting on you. This is your future. Don't leave it blank.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:38 p.m. on March 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 31 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Proclamation 7286—Census Day, 2000

April 1, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every 10 years, as mandated by our Constitution, all persons living in the United States are called upon to participate in the census. As the foremost method of gathering information about our Nation, the census plays a crucial role in helping us to maintain our democratic form of government.

An accurate census helps to ensure that the rights and needs of every person are recorded and recognized as we shape public policies, programs, and services. Too often in the past, children, minorities, and low-income individuals have not been counted and, as a result, have not been fully and fairly served. Census data are also used to determine the number of seats each State is allocated in the U.S. House of Representatives, and State and local governments depend upon these data to draw legislative districts that accurately represent their residents.

The census also serves as the basis for many public funding and private investment decisions. Census results play a part in determining the portion each State receives of more than $185 billion in funds distributed by the Federal Government each year. State and local public officials use census data to decide where to build public facilities such as schools, roads, hospitals, and libraries. Census data also are a valuable resource for businesses that are trying to identify where to build stores, office buildings, or shopping centers.

The census is unique. It reaches every population group, from America's long-time residents to its most recent immigrants, and every age group from newborns to centenarians. The census touches every social class and every racial and ethnic group. The census is truly a democratic process in which we all can participate.

Census 2000 offers each of us an important opportunity to shape the future of our Nation. By taking part, we help ensure the well-being of our families and our communities, and we fulfill one of our fundamental civic duties. The U.S. Census Bureau has taken unprecedented steps to ensure full participation in this first census of the new millennium. At the same time, the Bureau will continue its long tradition of protecting the personal information of America's citizens, and no other Government agency will be able to see any individual or family census form. I strongly urge every man and woman living in the United States to fill out and return his or her census form or to cooperate with census takers who will help them do so.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 1, 2000, as Census Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness of the importance of participating in Census 2000.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, 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., April 4, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 5.

Remarks at an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Luncheon for Hillary Clinton

April 1, 2000

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

The President. ——we couldn't have done what has been done without you, and I'll

never forget you. I would also like to thank Denis and the New York AFL–CIO. They supported—[*inaudible*]—and me and supported—[*inaudible*]—and Hillary. I thought she made a really good talk today.

I just want to make three points very briefly. First of all, when I showed up here in January of '93, thanks to the efforts of many of you and millions and millions of people like you all across America, and the economy was in a shambles, the deficit was huge, and the debt had been quadrupled in 12 years, and the social problems were getting worse, and Washington was like a political blood fight, I had basically some very simple ideas about the economy and how it related to the rest of our lives. And I just want to reiterate that because that's where the differences are between us and our friends in the Republican Party. That's where the differences between Al Gore and George Bush are, and the differences between Hillary and her opponent.

Number one, I believe you could be pro-business and pro-labor. And as a matter of fact, I didn't think you could successfully have an economic policy unless you help both labor and business.

Number two, I believe you could be pro-work and pro-family, so that I thought we ought to have things like annual leave and health insurance, and if people were going to be required to move from welfare to work, we ought to give them child care and food and medicine for their kids and transportation to get to work and training to know what they were doing, instead of just talking about welfare cheats and all of that. I thought you could be pro-work and pro-family.

Number three, I thought you could be for economic growth and for environmental protection. I thought working families could be able to take their children to parks and that we could generally still grow the economy. I believed all those things. And essentially, our friends in the other party believe that they can only help business by sticking it to labor, that every family protection is bad for the economy and the work ethic, and that the environment's a nice thing as long as you don't have to take too much trouble to protect it. Now, that's what they believe. And so we've had this donnybrook for 7½ years.

But I think the evidence is in, and you need to think about that in terms of Hillary's race, the Vice President's race, every other race this year. It's not as if there is a debate here based on the evidence. We have the longest economic expansion in history; we have these 21 million jobs; we have the lowest unemployment and welfare rates in 30 years; we have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest income tax burden on average families in 4 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 4 years.

This is not some sort of fluke, friends. You're on the right side of history. So when you fight for the Presidential campaign, and you fight in the Senatorial race, tell people that this is not a debate, and they are making a deliberate decision, if they vote for the other candidates, to go back to a failed economic theory, a failed social theory, a failed environmental policy.

And you've got to be serious and blunt here. And I'm not running for anything, and you know, most days, I'm okay about it. [*Laughter*] What is at stake here is bigger than me or the Vice President or Hillary or all of you—it is the direction of our country. And you need to go out and say you're not anti-business; you've proved you could be pro-labor and pro-business. You've proved you could be pro-family and pro-work. You've proved you could clean out the environment and grow the economy. That's where you are. And they are making a deliberate decision to reject policies that have worked for America if they don't support the Vice President, Hillary, and our whole other crowd.

The second thing I want to tell you is, as you can see, my wife is an enormously talented and passionate person. But what I want you to know is that, particularly for a State like New York, which has always had high-quality people in the United States Senate, I think she would be a worthy successor to Robert Kennedy and Pat Moynihan. I think it's important for people to understand that she's not just somebody who lived in the White House for 8 years and would now like to be a Senator. For 30 years, she has been a leading advocate for the cause of families and children; for 20 years now, for specific,

provable advances in the quality of education for our children.

There is hardly anybody who runs as a private citizen for the United States Senate in my lifetime—I can't think of anybody who ran as a private citizen for the Senate who had as much knowledge as she has or as much experience as she has on the things that will really count in the terms of the shape of America and the children who are—[*inaudible*].

The third thing I want to say is, is this: The most important point Hillary made about me and us and our politics is that we believe that we should try to bring together, not drive them apart. They believe you have to drive people apart in order to win elections. And since they're wrong on the issues, they're right. In other words, people won't agree with them on the issues, so the only way they could win is to convince them that we're the first cousins of space aliens. [*Laughter*] Now, this is not a complicated deal. And so that's why Hillary's opponent can raise a double ton of money besides being mayor and having special relations with a lot of those people that—[*inaudible*]—New York. You've got this rightwing—[*inaudible*]—machine geared up against her again.

You know, when he wanted to be mayor of New York, he said, "I'm a moderate." When he wants to be Senator from New York, he wants all those rightwingers that helped Governor Bush in the nomination and are represented by the Bob Jones University flap you all heard about—he gets Richard Viguerie to write letters that raise the hair on the back of your head.

Now, there's a reason they've got to do that: because they like political power and the majority of the people do not agree with them. They've got this figured out now; we're right, and they're wrong on these big issues. So the only way they can win is to convince people that we're space aliens. But that's not good for America. Far better for them to modernize their party and their ideas and then engage in a debate and let the people move back and forth, depending on who they think is right on the specific issues. That's the way America is supposed to work.

But I want you to understand what's at stake in this election in New York and in America, because we've got a chance now, finally, to reject the politics of division. If you do this one more time, you've got a real chance to elevate the politics of America.

And let me tell you why it's so important. I want to close with this point. In February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of this country. And that's the good news. The bad news is it might put people to sleep and think they can afford to just go through—[*inaudible*]—or indulgences or on a whim or not vote at all in this election, because they think things are going along real well.

And let me tell you why what Hillary said—the most important point she made is about the politics of division. When we celebrated this economic expansion, I asked my economic advisers—I said, "Well, when was the last longest expansion in American history?" Do you know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. Now, let me take you on a little walk down memory lane. [*Laughter*]

In 1964 I was a senior in high school, a graduate. The country was heartbroken about President Kennedy's assassination but were heartened by President Johnson's leadership, strongly united behind him. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. We had a civil rights crisis, but everybody thought it was going to be handled in the context of the courts, not in the streets. We had a few people in Vietnam, but nobody thought it was going to tear the country up. Everybody thought America would win the cold war just in the course of events, because freedom was clearly superior to communism. And we were happy as clams and totally relaxed about it.

Now, 4 years later I graduated from college here in Washington—2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed; 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed; 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President because the country was so divided over Vietnam.

A few weeks later, Richard Nixon was elected President, based on a campaign that he represented the Silent Majority. Now, what were the necessary—[*inaudible*]—of that? Those of us who weren't for him were the loud minority. That was the first of these great "us" versus "them" campaigns, divide

not unite. And we've been "us-ing" and "them-ing" now for 30 years.

And when I ran for President, I said I wanted to put people first and have opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. That was the united, not divisive campaign. When we ran for reelection, we said we wanted to build a bridge to the 21st century that everybody could walk across. That's the united, not a divisive campaign.

And one of the reasons Hillary decided to enter this race is that she knew how important it was not only to be right on the specific issues but to keep trying to pull the country together as we grow more diverse, not tear it apart. And I like the way things are now, but they could be a whole lot better if we just focus and keep working and remember to be for business and labor, work and family, the environment and the economy, unite not divide. That's really what her race represents; that's what Al Gore's race represents; that's what the referendum on what kind of future we're going to have represents. And what I want to tell you is, I've been waiting since I was a boy of 17, for 35 years and more now, to see my country in the position we were in, in 1964, to build a future of our dreams for our children. And this election will determine whether we move to that level.

It took me years just to try to turn this country around and get it going in the right direction and to stop people from trying to take things away from you. Now we've got a chance to do something good. That's what this Senate race is about. That's what this Presidential race is about. That's what this whole election is about.

And you just keep in mind, people know, they know we're right on the issues, so they've got to beat us some other way. And you've got to stand up for unity and progress and the right kind of change.

I am grateful to you for what you've done for me, but what you can do for Hillary, what you can do for the Vice President, and most important, what you can do for America and your children's future will matter even more.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency. In his remarks, he referred to Denis M. Hughes, president, New York State AFL–CIO; Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Richard A. Viguerie, chairman, chief executive officer, and president, ConservativeHQ.com. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of John Robert Starr

April 1, 2000

Hillary and I are saddened to hear that John Robert Starr has passed away. He was a legendary figure in Little Rock and Arkansas history. As a former Arkansas bureau chief for the Associated Press, managing editor of the Arkansas Democrat and Democrat-Gazette, and a tough-as-nails columnist, John Robert always said and did what he thought was right.

John Robert was as tenacious a friend as he was a foe. In good and bad times alike, I always knew him to speak his mind and say exactly what he felt. That kind of candor can be strong medicine, but I learned to respect him for it. His legion of readers might not always agree with his point of view, but they read what he had to say.

Hillary and I offer our deepest condolences to his wife, Norma, their three children, and their many friends.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Brunch in Las Vegas, Nevada

April 2, 2000

The President. Let me, first of all, say I'm glad to be back. I never get tired of coming here. And most of you know that Brian and I went to college together—in spite of the fact that he now looks younger than me, we did. [*Laughter*] What can I say? I've had a harder life. [*Laughter*] And he and Myra have been wonderful to us. And Amy has been good enough to work for me at the White House, and for Mrs. Gore, and we feel that she's a part of our family.

Arnold and Rachel have taken me in in Arizona, as well as always coming up here

when I show up. And I'm just so grateful to all of you. And Jane always whispers in my ear and tells me what I should really be working on as President and how I should be doing it. [*Laughter*]

Janie Greenspun Gale. Have I been wrong? [*Laughter*]

The President. And the thing I really hate about it is that she's normally right. [*Laughter*] So I feel very much at home here. I'll be quite brief, but I want you to think about a few things.

First, I am very, very grateful to the people of Nevada for supporting me and Hillary and Al and Tipper through two Presidential elections. It's highly unusual for a Democrat to carry this State. And we did it—not by much, but we did it twice. And a lot of you in this room helped.

I am very grateful for the support that you have given all my policies. The nuclear waste issue is very important. I will say this to you—I was not wrong when I said last year—and Brian ran an article in the paper—that we needed Harry Reid back in the Senate, so we would have a veto-proof minority. And we also got—and that was really important. And Shelley Berkley also worked very hard on that, and we now have—my veto can be sustained. And that's very, very encouraging, and I want to thank all of you for that.

But I'd also, in a larger sense, just like to thank you for 7 years and a couple of months of genuine support for a new direction for our country. I want to particularly thank Congressman Bilbray, who would still be in Congress if he hadn't supported me. But I want you to know that.

We didn't have a vote to spare in August of 1993, when I asked the Congress to cut the deficit by at least $500 billion. And I knew if we didn't do it, we'd never get the economy turned around. And it passed by a single vote in the House and the Senate. And Al Gore cast the tie vote in the Senate, and as he said, whenever he votes, we win. [*Laughter*] That broke the tie, I mean. And every single Member of the House that voted for that bill can claim a large share of responsibility for the economic prosperity this country has enjoyed ever since. And many of them laid their jobs down to do it, and I will never forget it. And I want you to know that I never forgot, and I thank you.

Now, here's what I want to say, and I say this to you partly as your President and partly as a citizen, because I'm not running for anything this year. I'm the only person I know, practically, who's not running for anything. [*Laughter*] And most days, I'm okay about it.

We're in a position today that is highly unusual for any nation. You know, we're in the middle of the longest economic expansion in history. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded, lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, lowest poverty rates in 20 years, lowest crime rates in 25 years. And the question before the citizens of our country in this election is, now what? What are we going to do with what is truly an unprecedented moment?

If you saw my State of the Union Address, you know what I think we ought to do. I think that we ought to say, this is not a time for relaxing; this is a time for bearing down—that this is a chance of a lifetime, and we ought to identify every major challenge and every major opportunity our country's got out there and go after it, because we will never have a better chance to do it. That's what I believe.

I think that this is the time to build the 21st century education system. This is the time to help all these families, where both mothers and fathers work, balance work and family. This is the time to help deal with the aging of America, with families who provide long-term care to their parents, for disabled members of their families, to save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit.

It's time to pay the country out of debt. We can get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. And if we do, we'll give a whole—when Amy's my age, this country will be more prosperous than it otherwise would have been, if we do that.

It's a time to deal with the big environmental challenges. It's a time to deal with the possibility we now have of making this the safest big country in the world. When I became President, most people didn't think

the crime rate could go down. It's gone down now 7 years in a row. But no one believes America's as safe as it ought to be.

It's a time to make a major commitment to 21st century science and technology. We were talking at the other table about energy technology and how, if we can just make one more discovery with biofuels, we'll be able to create 8 gallons of ethanol with 1 gallon of gasoline. And when you have cars getting 70 miles per gallon, which will be soon, it would be like getting over 500 miles to the gallon of gasoline. It will change the whole future of the world when this happens.

In a few weeks, we'll have the honor of announcing that the consortium that the United States and Great Britain have been part of for some years, to unlock the mysteries of the human genome, will be completed. And 3 billion genes in 80,000 sequences will all be out there, thanks to computer technology. And when that happens, it won't be long until somebody figures out how to stop people like me when we get old from getting Alzheimer's. Two people in my family have had it.

They'll be able to figure out how to block the gene that causes Parkinson's, that the Attorney General and many other well-known people, including Michael J. Fox, now are dealing with. They will be able to figure out—and Muhammad Ali. They'll be able to figure out how to identify all kinds of cancers when there are just a few cells collected, and it will dramatically increase the cure rate. All this stuff is right around the corner. Not to mention the fact that I think within a couple of years, you'll actually know what's in those black holes in the universe. This is going to be a very interesting time to be alive.

We also see, in a more sort of tangible way, the role the United States still has for peace and freedom around the world, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, fighting against terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the work I tried to do when I was in India and Pakistan recently.

And I guess what I would like to say to you is that beyond all of the specifics, the simple question of this election is, what are we going to do with this money? And the American people have big choices. And the reason that I support Vice President Gore, quite apart from my personal loyalty to him and affection to him, is that I've worked with him for 7 years, and I know that he understands the future and has the knowledge and experience and the strength to take us there. And that swamps every one of the specifics.

The second reason is that I believe that the Republicans' advocacy of a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed last year—for it to become law would mean we could not get the country out of debt; we would not have the money to save Social Security and Medicare; we would not have the money to invest in 21st century schools. All of you would be better off, but only for a little bit. And I think, far better to have a more modest tax cut that helps people educate their children, provide decent child care, deal with this long-term care crisis, which is going to become bigger and bigger and bigger for all of our families, and get the country out of debt, keep interest rates down, and keep the economy going.

That's what I believe. But these are huge choices. And underneath it all there is something that I have—basically has been the great passion of my life, and that is whether we're going to go forward as one America or we're going to go back to politics as usual, where we just divide up in camps and see which camp is bigger.

A couple of Sundays ago—more than that now, but just recently, on a Sunday, I had an opportunity to go to Selma, Alabama, to commemorate the 35th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, where Congressman John Lewis, then just a young man, and Reverend Hosea Williams and comedian Dick Gregory and a lot of others marched across a bridge over a river at Selma on their way to Montgomery. They were beaten and beaten back. But a few days later, they marched to Montgomery, and 6 months later we got the Voting Rights Act.

And it was one of the—for me as a southerner, it was one of the great moments of my life. And most of the people who walked over that bridge are still alive, and most of them walked over that bridge with me again. But I was thinking about the 35 years that have—some of you are too young to remember; most of you are around my age. Let me tell you something about 35 years ago.

We celebrated the longest economic expansion in history this February. So we were sitting around talking about it one day, and I had all my economic advisers there. And I said, "Now, before we broke this record, when was the last longest economic expansion in history?"—1961 to 1969. So in '64, I graduate from high school—low inflation; low unemployment; high growth; Lyndon Johnson is President; high optimism that he will be able to lead the country away from the heartbreak of President Kennedy's assassination, and we'll solve all the civil rights problems in the Congress and in the courts. We've got some people in Vietnam, but nobody thinks it's going to tear the country apart, and everybody believes America will prevail in the cold war—'64.

And even in the bloody conflicts like Selma, it was all part of progress, you know. Things were happening. Okay. Four years later, 1968, we're graduating from college, Brian and I are. June 8, 1968, we're at Georgetown finishing college 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed; 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed; 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President anymore because the country was just split right down the middle on the Vietnam war.

A few weeks later, President Nixon is elected on one of these "us" and "them" campaigns. I call them "us" and "them" campaigns. He represented the Silent Majority—that was his slogan—which meant those of us that weren't for him, we were in the loud minority, and there was something wrong with us. A few weeks after that, the longest economic expansion in American history came to an end.

Now, what's that got to do with this? You know, I'm not trying to be a downer here; I'm an inherently optimistic person. But this is a moment for making tomorrows. This is not a moment for indulging ourselves in all this good stuff that's going on today. And the only way to really ensure that it continues to happen is to keep thinking about tomorrow and keep trying to make them and to take on these big challenges we know are out there.

There are going to be twice as many people over 65 in 30 years as there are today. It's a big challenge. We can fix it right now. We can basically prepare ourselves for it right now. That's just one example. But that's the decision the American people are going to have to make. More than anything else is the general thing—are we going to go back to an approach that is more satisfying in the short run that we know doesn't work, or are we going to try to keep building on the change of the last 7 years? Are we going to pick leaders that we know understand the future and can take us there, or are we going to pick people who say things we like to hear and may make it easier for us in the next month or 2?

That's really what's going on here. And I guess what I would like to tell you—it hit me with Selma—and I say this more as a citizen than as President. I have waited now for 35 years for my country once again to have a chance to build a future of our dreams for our kids. It's a long time. It may not happen again in our lifetime. That's why this election is so important.

So if they ask you why you came here today, I hope you can give them that answer.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to brunch hosts Brian L. and Myra Greenspun and their daughter, Amy; Mrs. Greenspun's parents, Arnold and Rachel Smith; Janie Greenspun Gale, vice chairman, board of trustees, Las Vegas Springs Preserve; former Representative James H. Bilbray; actor Michael J. Fox; former boxing champion Muhammad Ali; and civil rights activists Hosea Williams and Dick Gregory.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee and Nevada State Democratic Party Reception in Las Vegas

April 2, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, first, let me say I am delighted to be here. When I got up this morning—a little early, because we had this shift to daylight savings time—it was cloudy in Washington. And I think I made a good swap. [*Laughter*] I just talked to Hillary on the phone, and I'm on my way to northern California to do an event and

see our daughter tonight, and I think I made a good decision to travel West today. I love coming back to Las Vegas.

I will say—you know, Jan was kind of joshing with me on the way in. I said, "Gosh, I love this house." And she said, "Well, you know, I'll give you a lot of variety because I move every year." [*Laughter*] And I think she ought to give this place at least 18 months. This is a wonderful place, and I'm delighted to be here, and I think we all are.

I want to thank Senator Bryan, as he retires. I want to wish him well and thank him for all that he did as Senator, Governor, and attorney general. I'm so old and creaky, I served with both Dick Bryan and Bob Miller, and I thank you, sir, for everything you did. Thank you, and we wish you well.

I want to thank Harry Reid, and I want to thank you, Representative Berkley, for helping to get the votes that will guarantee that when I veto that nuclear waste bill, the veto will be sustained. And I thank you for that.

I told the people of Nevada in November of 1998 in no uncertain terms that if they wanted to have the law observed instead of short-circuited, they had to reelect Harry Reid, and that we needed a Member of Congress from our party who had agreed with us here. And you won, and you won. And Harry was like Jack Kennedy in 1960; he didn't buy a single vote he didn't need. [*Laughter*]

And I want to be heard again publicly on this. If it hadn't been for your delegation working the Congress, explaining the issue, we would never have gotten enough votes on our side—and we did better this time—to sustain the President's veto. And I would hope the people of Nevada will think about this in this coming Presidential race, because I'm not on the ballot, and I won't be here next time. And I'll guarantee it; it is an absolute certainty, 100 percent certainty, that there is a difference in position between the candidates on this issue.

Keep in mind, when the study was originally done, there were two sides that were thought to be appropriate, possibly. One was in Nevada; the other was in rural Texas. So I'll leave it to you. [*Laughter*] I know you can figure this out.

I want to thank Governor Miller, too, for being my great friend and for all the things that we've done together. We even took a trip to the Balkans together recently, and we had a good time in Bulgaria. I want to thank you, Ed Bernstein, for running for the United States Senate. It's a hard thing to do as a private citizen, and I thank you.

And thank you, Rory Reid, for being the chair of this party. I want to thank all the members of the legislature and the city council, the county commissioners, Mayor Gibson from Henderson, for being here. I want to thank Ed Rendell, my great friend, who when he retired as mayor of Philadelphia, I said I had a little part-time job I wanted him to do. [*Laughter*] And he's embraced it with gusto.

Thank you, Janice Griffin. There was a couple here who have not been introduced that I'd like to acknowledge. They've come from Chicago, and Lou Weisbach and his wife, Ruth—he's the head of our Jefferson Trust Program for the Democratic Party. And I want to welcome them to Las Vegas and thank them for coming out here with me. And I want to thank former Congressman Bilbray for being here.

Let me say one thing about him, as well, I said earlier. We celebrated—I will begin and end with this fact—we celebrated the longest economic expansion in the history of America in February. It happened because when Al Gore and I were elected, we first of all said, even before we took office, that we were going to do something about the crippling deficit and the debt of our country, which had quadrupled—quadrupled—in the 12 years before I took office. The deficit was $290 billion, projected to be about $400 billion this year. And we said we would do something about it.

And interest rates immediately started to drop. Then I presented a program; they started to drop again. Then, in August of '93, came decision time. Were we finally, after 12 years of irresponsibility, going to actually do something about the deficit that was gripping our country?

Now, don't forget what America was like in 1992: high unemployment; high interest rates; low growth; every time we'd get out of a recession, we'd fall right back in; social

problems getting worse; Washington full of name-calling and political division, not much going on. That's what was happening.

And the Republicans made a decision that they would not give us a single, solitary vote on the deficit reduction package in 1993. Not one. And the leadership put the word out; no one could budge. And they told everybody this was nothing but a tax increase, in spite of the fact that we cut thousands of programs and eliminated hundreds. And they said it would wreck the American economy, and they washed their hands of it. They said, "We're not responsible for what happens." And they certainly aren't. [*Laughter*]

And this man, Jim Bilbray, voted with me. And he gave up his seat in Congress because of it, because by 1994 the American people had not yet felt that the economy was doing better. They had not felt it. And the Republicans could come out and say, "Well, they all voted for tax increases." Well, a few of you may have had your taxes increased—about 1.2 percent of the American people did. The rest either had no tax increase or an income tax cut.

But we lost a lot of good people in the Congress, and he was one. But I want you to know, if he hadn't cast that vote, we didn't—we passed that budget by one vote. And everything that has happened since, right down to the longest economic expansion in history, would not have happened if we hadn't gone from deficits to surpluses, and gone from high interest rates to low interest rates. And I thank you, Mr. Bilbray, for what you did.

Now, let me say—I want to just get out and say hello to you, and it's a warm day, and I don't want you to have to stand a long time in the Sun. But I want you to think about this. If I were to ask you, what's this election about, what would you answer?

This is my answer: Seven years and a few months ago, Al Gore and I took office. And we said we were going to put the people of this country first by going beyond the politics of division to try to create a country in which there was opportunity for every responsible citizen; in which we had one community across all the racial, religious, and other lines that divide us; in which we're the leading force in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, and that anybody who wanted to be a part of that should have a chance.

And we have now worked for over 7 years. We not only have the longest economic expansion in history and 21 million new jobs, we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 25 years, the highest homeownership in the history of the country. Now, that is the record.

We have also downsized the Government to the point—it's now the size it was when Dwight Eisenhower was President, and that was a year or 2 ago. And yet, we're doing more. So there's not a real debate here. What we have stood for works. And what we have to decide now is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? Are we going to give in to our fears, or are we going to act on our hopes? Are we going to take the easy way because there seems to be no adverse consequence, or are we going to sort of lift our visions and take on the big challenges of the future?

The real issue is here, not what we've done for the last 7 years, but now that we have this moment, what are we going to do with it? And my answer to you is quite simple. You get a chance like this once in a lifetime, a country does. And we have got to use this moment to take care of the big challenges that our children are going to face when they grow up. And I'll just mention a few.

We could create 21st century schools with world-class education for all of our kids. But we've got to have high standards, accountability, and support, from after-school and summer school programs to computers to modernized facilities in a lot of the cities like Philadelphia where the average school building is 65 years old, and in New York, where many of the schools, believe it or not, are still heated by coal-fired furnaces built in the 19th century. We can build those 21st century schools.

We can deal with the 21st century family. We have to help people balance work and family. What does that mean? It means, among other things, I think people ought to get a tax deduction for college tuition. I think

they ought to get a tax credit for long-term care, because more and more families are taking care of their elderly parents or members with disability. I think that we ought to have a tax incentive for child care for working families. Those are the kinds of tax breaks I favor.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage again. The last time I raised it, they said it would increase unemployment. Since then, we've had record job growth. People ought to make a decent living. I think these are the kinds of things that we ought to do.

I think that we ought to recognize that when we baby boomers retire, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security, and we should move now—now—not then, now, to lengthen the life of Social Security to 2053—that's my proposal—out beyond the lifespan of the baby boom generation; to save Medicare; to add a prescription drug benefit. Sixty percent of the seniors in this country today can't afford the prescription drugs they need. We ought to do it now.

We ought to act now to prove we can grow the economy and preserve the environment and deal with the problem of climate change and all the other environmental challenges we face. It's not necessary to hurt the economy to do that.

You get the idea. I remember one of the members of the other party criticized me for going to India and Pakistan because we didn't, so-called, "get anything." I think we got a lot out of going to India and Pakistan. I don't want them to have a war, and I think that we should do it. I believe America should be a force for peace and against discrimination and hatred—from Kosovo and Bosnia to the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to Africa and India and Pakistan. That's what I believe.

Now, all of this is at issue. I'm for Al Gore for President not just because I'm devoted to him and I feel loyalty because he's been the finest Vice President in history, but because I know—because I know he understands the future and he has the experience, the ability, and the will to lead us in this direction.

And I came here to help these folks in Nevada who are running for Congress, because I think it's important. Let me tell you something—it really matters who is in the Senate. They're going to vote on a comprehensive test ban treaty; the Republicans just voted it down. The first time since the dawn of the nuclear age the United States walked away from its responsibility to a safer world. But he would vote for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It's a big deal. The world these children are going to live in will have all kinds of people trying to build small-scale nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. You can't say it doesn't matter just because we're out here and things are prosperous today. It does matter.

It matters who—the next President is going to appoint between two and four members of the Supreme Court. Who do you want voting to confirm them? You need to think about these things. And I will say again, this nuclear waste issue, it will not go away. So you need to reelect this fine woman to Congress, and you need to vote for a Senator who will fight with us, and you need to remember that if you make the wrong decision in the White House, you can forget it; it's history. You need to remember these things.

Let me just say again, this is the longest economic expansion in history, and I'm proud of it, and I'm grateful I've had a chance to be a part of it. And I'm delighted that I have had an opportunity to be President, and I love this job. I never would quit if I weren't term limited, I don't think. [*Laughter*]

But I say this to you as a citizen. The last time we had an expansion this long was in the sixties. And when I—I grew up in it. I graduated from high school in it in 1964, and I did think it would go on forever—low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. I thought all of the civil rights problems of the country would be solved in the Congress and the courts. I had a President, Lyndon Johnson, who was going to do it. I never dreamed the country would be divided over Vietnam in 1964. By the time I graduated from college, Robert Kennedy had been killed 2 days before; Martin Luther King had been killed 2 months before; Lyndon Johnson, 9 weeks before, had to get out of the President's race because our country was divided over Vietnam.

Richard Nixon got elected on a campaign saying he was for the Silent Majority, which means those of us who weren't for him were outcast in the loud minority, launching whole decades of divisive politics. And just a few months afterward, the longest expansion in American history was gone—history. It was over.

Now, it's a pretty warm day, and we're all in a good humor, and there's not a more optimistic person out here by this pool than me. But I'm telling you, this is the chance of a lifetime. That's what you're here for. Are we going to take on the big challenges, or go back to the easy way out? Are we going to pull together across the lines that divide us with things like the hate crimes bill and the employment nondiscrimination bill, or are we going to go back to "us" and "them" politics?

I've been waiting for 35 years for this to roll around again—35 years since my country had a chance to build the future of its dreams for its children. I'm a Democrat by heritage, instinct, and conviction. I'm proud of what we've done. But the best is yet to be. You go out and tell people that, and we'll win in November.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Jan Jones of Las Vegas; former Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada; senatorial candidate Ed Bernstein; Rory Reid, chair, Nevada State Democratic Party; Mayor James B. Gibson of Henderson, NV; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; and Janice Griffin, chair, Women's Leadership Forum.

Remarks on Arrival in San Jose, California, and an Exchange With Reporters

April 2, 2000

Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan

The President. I just wanted to say that I have heard today the sad news that Prime Minister Obuchi has been hospitalized with a stroke. He has been a good friend to me personally, a good friend of the United States. And he has been a tireless worker to restore the Japanese economy and to bring Asia back from its financial crisis.

And I just wanted to say that the thoughts and prayers of the American people are with him, his family, and the people of Japan. We hope for a speedy recovery. And in the meanwhile, we will work with Acting Prime Minister Aoki to maintain the strong relationship we enjoy.

But I think Prime Minister Obuchi is a very good man, and I—it's sad news for all of us here in America, but we're pulling for his recovery, and we will—we will keep our prayers there.

Thank you very much.

Q. What are you hearing about—about how he is?

The President. Nothing. I have tried to get more information, but all I know is that he's hospitalized, and the condition was serious enough to appoint an acting Prime Minister. That may or may not mean anything, you know. My guess is that they'll have to wait a while and assess——

2000 Elections

Q. Mr. President, did you hear—did you hear Mr. Lazio's comments today indicating he might get into the New York Senate race?

The President. No, I have no knowledge of that.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at Moffett Field. In his remarks, he referred to Acting Prime Minister Mikio Aoki of Japan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Reception in Palo Alto, California

April 2, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. I must say, when Dick was talking about all those fights we've taken on, and I got to thinking about some more—when I helped Mexico. The morning we gave them financial aid, there was a poll in the paper that said, by 81 to 15, the people thought it was a mistake. So he kept talking about that. I thought, Mr. Gephardt is up there describing a fool,

and now I have to get up and speak. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Jim and Bridget for having us here. It is truly beautiful, and I always like to have an excuse to come back. And I want to thank my daughter for showing up tonight. Those of you—we were just talking around the table about newborns. When your children grow up, you're always mildly surprised when they want to spend time with you. It's actually quite wonderful. [*Laughter*] So this is quite nice for us.

I want to thank the Flying Other Brothers. I wonder how many young people here are Dead Heads in the crowd. But they were great. And I apologize, they caught me by surprise. They invited me to play with them, and I thought, well, these poor men don't know that that saxophone mouthpiece has no reed on it. And then after he went back up, I realized they had actually pickled me some reeds in a jar there. So you guys will have to give me a raincheck; I'll do it some other time. We'll have another chance to do it.

Band member. We'll hold you to it. [*Laughter*]

The President. I want to tell you how grateful I am to the Members who are here, to Patrick Kennedy and Bob Menendez, to my good friend Charlie Rangel, and to Zoe Lofgren and Ellen Tauscher, to Nancy Pelosi and Anna Eshoo. California has a marvelous combination of women there. We also have Martin Frost from Texas here and David Wu from Oregon. We're glad to have them.

And I want to thank—and maybe others—I want to thank Mike Honda and Adam Schiff for being willing to run for the House of Representatives, and I, too, believe they will win. I want to also thank all of you not only for being here but for the work that we have done together actually since I started coming out here in 1991. I wanted the Democratic Party in the 1992 election to be the party of the future in America. And it was quite obvious to me and to anyone who was paying attention that we couldn't be the party of the future unless we came to those of you who are making the future.

And I want to thank you for all the things we've worked on—to pass a pro-competition Telecommunications Act in 1996, to change some of the laws on exports and deal with the visa issues and a whole range of other issues. I want to especially thank—there are many people here, but I see John Doerr and Eric Schmidt within my line of sight, who have called me on your behalf and badgered me at all hours of the day and night to move the Government faster. They said, "We realize that the Government is not in the Internet age, but at least we ought to be out of the stone age. Please move."

I thank them and all the rest of you who have done that over the last 7 years. Dick Gephardt's talked about the issues and the stakes, and you're well aware of them. But I would like to say just a few things to you.

First of all, there is a huge difference in these two parties. And there is no doubt, as Mr. Gephardt said, that the Democrats are in the minority in the House of Representatives today because in 1993 and in 1994 they had the courage to vote alone, without a single Republican vote, to bridle the enormous deficit that had quadrupled the American debt in 12 years—it was $290 billion a year when I took office, slated to be about $400 billion this year. And we just decided we had to do something about it—that if we didn't do it, we'd never get interest rates down; we'd never get investment up; we'd never get growth going in the American economy. We had a little bit of a recovery; we were going to slip out of it. We just knew that we had to do it.

And from the moment I announced our plan in December of '92, things really took off. And then we had the vote, and I'll never forget this—in August of 1993, when all these Members were having to walk the plank and go down and vote—and not a single Republican was going in—all the Republicans were saying, "You know, this is going to be a disaster; it's going to be horrible; we're not responsible for anything that happens after this." And they're not. [*Laughter*] That's what they said, and they were right.

And then we got into the gun business. We passed the Brady bill, and we passed the assault weapons ban, which Senator Feinstein was especially active in passing. And oh, they said the world was going to come to an end. And we lost—I'm telling you, we lost a lot of Members of the House of Representatives on the budget bill, because the people

hadn't felt the benefit of the improving economy by '94, and on the gun issue. I'll never forget, when I went back to New Hampshire, which is a State like my home State of Arkansas, where more than half the people have a hunting license, and I said, "I want to go into the middle of a bunch of hunters"—and I went back in '96, because they beat a Congressman up there because he voted for the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. And I told those guys—I remember, there were just all these guys in their plaid shirts just looking at me kind of souled up, and I said, "You know, if any of you missed a day, even an hour in the deer woods on account of the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, I want you to vote against me, too, because that Congressman lost his job because of me. But if you didn't, they lied to you, and you need to get even." And they did.

I say that because one of the things that I wanted to do when I ran in '92 was to change the whole way people thought about politics in Washington. Everything was either/or. You know, there was a liberal position and a conservative position. There was a Democratic position and there was a Republican position. Everybody was supposed to hunker down and fight and get their 15 seconds on the evening news. And as a result, not very much got done, and we kept getting deeper and deeper and deeper in the ditch. And I believed that you could be, for example, pro-business and pro-labor. I thought you could be pro-growth and pro-environment. I thought you could be pro-work and pro-family. I thought we could balance the budget, still invest more in education and technology and scientific research. And lo and behold, it worked. And I want you to understand this. These people here, who have served with me, under the most relentless pressure imagined, have stood up for a politics that will both unify this country and move us forward.

You know, I'm not running for anything this year. And most days, I'm okay about it. [*Laughter*] I do have a mild interest in the Senate race in New York that I'm—but I come here tonight as much as President as an American citizen who has had a unique vantage point on this last 7½ years. And I will say again, there is a huge difference.

This party—I want to thank Congressman Gephardt. I know you probably all saw the big press he got when he came out for a five- or six-point plan directed specifically at our high-tech future, or a permanent extension of the research and experimentation tax credit—a number of other issues that the Democratic caucus has embraced to move us forward. But there is a big difference.

Now, we're in Washington today fighting for some things that I think are important. We believe that we ought to stop giving out education money to projects that don't work, and only fund those things which do. We believe that there ought to be high standards. We think there ought to be an end to social promotion. But we think that every child ought to have a chance to learn. Children shouldn't be blamed when the system fails.

I thank Governor Davis for his championing the charter school movement, and all of you who have helped that. But we also need to have after-school programs and summer school programs in these schools. We need to close the digital divide and finish the work of hooking up all the classrooms to the Internet. And a lot of you have helped us with that, and I thank you for that.

We need to reform the health care system and add prescription drugs to Medicare coverage. We need to save Social Security and take it out way beyond the life of the baby boom generation—and we can do that if we don't have a tax cut that's too big. And that's going to be a big deal when all of us baby boomers retire.

We need to have a tax cut we can afford, and it ought to be targeted toward helping people send their kids to college, care for their parents and disabled family members and long-term care, and to help working people on modest incomes afford their child care and other expenses.

We need to carry, I think to a much greater degree than we have, a commitment to the notion that we can improve the environment while we grow the economy. That's what this whole global warming issue is about. All over the world, there are people who just don't believe that you can get rich unless you put more stuff in the air that heats up the Earth. They think you've got to burn

more coal and more oil, and in the digital economy that is not true. It is not true.

Pretty soon, we'll all be driving cars that get 80 miles a gallon, and if we can crack the last little chemical barrier, we'll be able to have biofuels where you can make 8 gallons of ethanol, for example, with only 1 gallon of gasoline. And then we'll all be effectively getting 550 miles a gallon.

Pretty soon everybody will be building their houses with glass that keeps out more heat and cold and lets in more light. We saved $100,000 a year on the White House power bills just by changing the lights in one place. I've ordered the whole Federal Government to do what we did when we greened the White House. It will be the equivalent of taking 1.7 million cars off the road. And it's just the beginning.

These are some of the things where we actually differ with the other party. And Dick was talking about the gun issue. Somebody asked me what I thought about Charlton Heston the other day saying all those mean things about me, and I said, I still like his movies. [*Laughter*] And I do. And I actually liked him—he came to the White House, to the Kennedy Center Honors a couple of years ago. And I know that that's the way they think. But you have to understand the difference between the two parties.

The Republicans who follow the NRA believe that guns are the only area of our national life where we should deal with problems only with punishment and no prevention. They say, just throw the book at somebody if they violate one of these existing laws, but for goodness sakes, don't inconvenience anybody else by closing the gun show loophole, by requiring child trigger locks, by banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which make a mockery of our assault weapons ban. This is a big deal because it shows you how they define community.

How would you feel if I said, "You know, nearly everybody who goes in an airport is a good, honest citizen, 99.9 percent of them are, and those metal detectors when it's crowded and you're late for your plane are a real pain, you know, especially if you've got a big money clip or something that keeps going off. It just drives you crazy. So I want to take all of the metal detectors out of the airports, and the next time somebody blows up a plane, I'm going to throw the book at them." You think about it. That is the logic that the other party has in blocking this commonsense gun legislation. This is a big deal. And it will carry over into other issues. It does carry over into the tobacco issue and many others. So there is a huge difference.

But maybe most important of all, there is a difference about how we define our community. We're for the hate crimes legislation. We're for the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." We believe that everybody ought to be a part of America if they're willing to obey the law and work hard, then everybody ought to have a chance. We think everyone matters; we think we all do better when we help each other. That's what we believe.

I think that's even more important than our commitment to high technology and scientific research. One of the unbelievable ironies of this world in which we live is that we think about now, in the next few years, not only these energy advances I mentioned, but just in a couple of months, I will be able to announce the sequencing of the human genome, that it will be finished. And then before you know it, we'll figure out how to block the genes that cause Alzheimer's or Parkinson's.

Before you know it, we'll be able to find cancers when there are just a few cells. There will be unbelievable advances in biochemistry, and a lot of you have been a part of that. We'll find out what's in the black holes in the universe in the next two or three decades. It's an amazing time.

Now, isn't it interesting, since all of you are in the .com world, that for all the wonders of the modern world, the biggest problem people face is the oldest problem of human society, the fear of the other, people who are different. And therefore, the most dangerous thing in a society are people who seek to exploit that fear of the other and that difference.

I just got back from India and Pakistan and Bangladesh. Now, I was in a little Indian village—you may have seen it, I was dancing with the village women, and they were throwing flowers and everything—a very poor village, but they have a computer with

software sufficient to give the poorest villagers, in Hindi or English, or good visuals, if they don't read very well, all of the information available from every national and state agency in India in a little village, and they have a printer.

So I watched a woman with a newborn baby come in and get the web page for the health department on the line, and she had it on her screen and exactly what she was supposed to do in the first few months of her baby's life. And then she printed it out, and she took it home, and she had information in this remote rural village in India, just as good as anybody could get here in northern California.

I went to Hyderabad, where I met with the chief government minister. They have 18 government services on the Internet now. If you're there, you can get a car licensed on the Internet. Nobody goes to the revenue office anymore. Governor, if you do that, you'll be elected until the end of your life. [*Laughter*] This is an amazing thing.

If you look at America, there are 750 companies in Silicon Valley, alone, headed by Indian-Americans. There are 200 ethnic groups in America; Indians and Pakistanis both rank in the top five in per capita income and per capita education. And yet, they are sitting there staring at each other across the divide of Kashmir with nuclear weapons. And they can't let it go, and they can't get beyond it.

Can you imagine what would happen to the Middle East, in no time, if we could actually resolve the remaining differences? It's no accident that Ireland has the fastest growing economy in Europe, because they finally started to make peace with one another. And yet, everywhere we see these demons.

It's very important that the governing part in Washington believe that we can be one America and be committed to the future and a unifying vision of the future. I want Al Gore to be President, not just because I'm grateful to him for being what everybody knows is the most influential Vice President in history, but because he understands the future, and he has the ideas, the experience, and the will, the strength, to lead us there.

I want these people to get in the majority, not just because I feel terrible that they fell on the sword for me when we had to get this economy moving again and we had to take a stand for sensible gun safety laws, but because I know they can represent that kind of future. I can look at every Member here and imagine some—remember some conversation I've had with them over the years that just made me proud that they were members of my party.

I just want to leave you with this thought. Most of you who have done real well here are younger than I am. And I never thought—you know, the older you get, young is always defined as somebody who's a year younger than you are. But I want to tell you a story about this moment, because I want you to understand, this is a terribly important election. I have worked as hard as I could to turn our country around and get us moving in the right direction. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. That's the good news. But there's still people in places left behind.

We've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years, but the country's still too dangerous. We still haven't stepped up to our environmental responsibilities. And there are still a lot of dangers out there in the world. One of the reasons that I hope so much that this China MFN bill will pass, then getting China into the WTO, is that I think it will reduce the tensions across the Taiwan Strait, and I don't want a conflict there that will totally set back all of east Asia for a generation. I want them to keep moving forward, and I think it's important.

So let me say this. I want you all to listen to this—especially those of you who are younger than me. In February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history. So I got all my little team together and we were laughing, probably being a little too self-congratulatory, because you had as much to do with it as we did. All I did was try to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives.

But I asked them, I said, when was the last longest economic expansion in history? And it was between 1961 and 1969, when we grew up. So let me tell you a story about

that. And I'm not telling you this to get anybody down. There's no more optimistic person in this tent tonight than me. But I want you to listen to this—1964, at the high watermark of the last longest economic expansion in history, I graduated from high school. Lyndon Johnson was President, uniting the country after President Kennedy's tragic assassination. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth, and everybody thought it was just going to go on and on and on.

We had a civil rights challenge, but everyone thought it was going to be handled in the Congress and the courts, not in the streets, because we had a President and a Congress who believed in them. No one believed that what was then a sort of simmering conflict in Vietnam would rip the heart out of America. And so we just rolled along. We thought it would go on.

Then, what happened? Four years later, 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 said he couldn't run for President; a few weeks before Richard Nixon was elected President, claiming that he represented the Silent Majority, which means that those of us who were on the other side were outcasts. We were in the loud minority. And it was the first of many elections where we attempted to divide America between "us" and "them." And those that weren't "us" were by definition "them." They weren't our crowd, and they didn't have a place at our table. And just a few weeks after that, in early 1969, the last longest economic expansion in American history came to an end.

Now, what I want to say to you as a citizen was that I have waited for 35 years, since I was a little boy, starting out in life, to see my country have a chance to build a future of our dreams for our children. We are free of internal crisis. The threats we have in the world, while serious, are not paralyzing. You have created a whole new economy that hasn't repealed the laws of supply and demand but has made them infinitely more elastic with infinitely more possibilities.

This is the kind of chance that comes along once in a lifetime. Don't let this election be about little things, and don't let this election be about divisive things. This is a time for building tomorrows. It comes along once in a great, long while. You have helped to make it so. And you can make sure that we make the most of this election.

These people should be elected because they represent the future, and they represent unity, and they believe we can go forward together. It is a precious gift. We have fought for it and worked for it and stood for it in strong winds. But now, it must be ratified in this election.

If somebody asked you tomorrow why you came here tonight, tell them that. Tell them we've got the chance of a lifetime to build a future of our dreams for our children, and you believe that these Democrats can give it to you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Jim and Bridget Jorgensen; State Assemblyman Mike Honda, candidate for California's 15th Congressional District; State Senator Adam Schiff, candidate for California's 27th Congressional District; attorney John Doerr; Eric Schmidt, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, Novell, Inc.; Gov. Gray Davis of California; and Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association.

Remarks at a Democratic Leadership Council Conference in San Jose, California

April 3, 2000

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. You saw me do this with my eyes. The lights are so bright in here that we only know when you applaud at the right times that we're talking to a DLC audience. [*Laughter*] Let me say, first of all, how delighted I am to be at the Tech Museum of Innovation. And I want to thank all the people from the museum who have made us feel welcome here, a lot of them are sitting over here. But this is a very appropriate place for us to be meeting, and I think we ought to give them a big hand for welcoming us here.

I want to thank Mayor Ron Gonzales for welcoming us here and for reminding me of that historic meeting 10 years ago when Al From and I came out here. Some of you here

were there then, in addition to Ron. I see Larry Stone and Toni Casey out here. And Steve Wesley wasn't there then. He was there shortly after. There were many others there I'm delighted to see, because we started something profoundly important then.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. In addition to Zoe Lofgren, Cal Dooley, and Anna Eshoo, and I think Representative Martin Frost may be here—someone said he was—from Texas. He was one of our early Members. I want to thank State Controller Kathleen Connell, who is here, and California Board of Education member Reed Hastings. I want to thank all the CEO's who have come today. I see my friend Dr. Irwin Jacobs, and Meg Whitman and Eric Benhamou. There are many others here. And I want to thank one of the people who was the architect of the economic policy that got so many kudos here, Laura Tyson. I think she's sitting in the second row there, although it's very bright.

I also want to thank the young people from City Year who are sitting in the back. When the San Jose contingent came in, I just happened to be coming into San Jose that night, and I welcomed them here. But they are the manifestation of our commitment to citizen service that grew out of one of our DLC projects. We really believed we could build an American community that was stronger and relished its diversity and still extolled its common values, if we could get more people involved in citizen service. And that's what AmeriCorps and City Year are all about, and I'm delighted that San Jose has such a strong representation. They're actually having their national conference out here in a few weeks, and I hope all of you will support them in every way you can.

Let me say, most of what needs to be said has been said. I do want to say a special word of appreciation, too, to Governor Davis. He has done so well on education; he has done so well on the economy; he has done so well on crime. But actually, Gray, I was even coming to California before you got elected and Chelsea came to Stanford. [*Laughter*] Actually, I think I've been here more than any President in history. I think, you know, something like 35 or 40 times.

But one of the things that I really appreciate is that when you say and when Zoe Lofgren says, we can govern from the center. I think it's very important that everyone understand that we define that as a dynamic, not a static, term; that we get people together and find a common approach that is oriented toward change, not the status quo. It would be difficult to look at a period of American history that has had more consistent, constructive change in the private, as well as in the public sector than we have seen in the last few years. So I think that that's something I want to emphasize.

And while I'm here, because I don't know when I'll have a chance to come back and say this, I want to thank Governor Davis for the work he's done in education to prove that if you have high standards and genuine accountability and you put your money where your mouth is, all our children can learn. I believe that.

I want to thank him and all of you, particularly in Silicon Valley, for your support of the charter school movement. When I became President, there was one charter school in America. There are now over 2,000, and I think we'll make our goal of 3,000 by the end of the year. And I hope we will continue to see it grow and flourish.

I want to thank you for being on the cutting edge of change on the issue of gun safety, as well, Governor. Last year California passed laws to ban junk guns, limit handgun sales to one a month, and to stiffen the assault weapons ban. Since then, we've seen similar State action all across America. Today, just today, Massachusetts is beginning to enforce tougher consumer product safety rules for guns, banning junk guns, requiring trigger locks, and the Maryland Legislature is considering legislation, as we speak, on child safety locks.

Next week I'm going to California to support a citizen ballot initiative—to Colorado, excuse me, in a State that, by registration, has become more and more Republican in the last 7 years. But they've got a citizens' ballot initiative out there in the aftermath of Columbine that would close the gun show loophole and require background checks on all gun sales. So I'm pleased about that.

We also announced a landmark agreement with Smith & Wesson, the large gun manufacturer, to change for the better the way guns are manufactured, marketed, and sold. And already 10 California cities and counties, including San Mateo County, your neighbor, have pledged, when they buy weapons for their police forces, to support manufacturers who have high standards for gun safety and dealer responsibility.

This is a huge deal, and it is appalling, the abuse that Smith & Wesson has taken from people who don't want to have sensible safety measures, for recognizing the fact, which is, an enormous percentage of crimes are committed with guns, are committed with guns that come from a very small percentage of dealers. And all they've said is, "We're going to try to manufacture safer guns, and we're going to try to use more responsible dealers." And for their trouble, they have been subject to enormous abuse. Smith & Wesson's almost up there with me in the abuse we're getting from that crowd. [*Laughter*]

But I just want to say—you know, somebody asked me the other day what I thought about all those mean things Charlton Heston said about me. And I said, I still like to watch his movies. [*Laughter*] And I still think he's a nice fellow. But I think the American people have decided that we can have our hunting and our sports shooting and still have sensible prevention. And this should not be the only area of our life where we don't prevent bad things from happening in the first place.

Once again, I hope the United States will be following the lead of California, and I hope that we can pass our sensible gun safety legislation before the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy on April the 20th. But I wanted to thank Governor Davis for that, as well.

And finally, let me say by way of introduction, I don't know if Al From will ever get the credit he deserves for the political revolution which has been wrought in America over the last decade. But whatever contribution I have made through the DLC—and I love being in the DLC. You know, I love ideas, and I'm sort of a—they used to make fun of me for being a policy wonk when I ran for President. But we believed ideas mattered.

He, however, was willing to devote his life to creating an organization that got people together who believed ideas mattered. He believed that the center should be vital, not stale. He thought the polarizing politics of Washington was nuts and destructive to America's future. And he gave people like Cal Dooley and Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, and Gray Davis and me a place from which we could work and proudly embrace our party and its heritage. And I just want to thank you, Al, for now over 16 years of service to your country, by preserving its oldest political party's heritage and ideas and ideals. Thank you very much.

Ten years ago, when Al From and I came out here, we figured that, if the Democratic Party had a future, it had to be hooked into the future and that you were making the future. It wasn't very complicated. We did not believe that America could be what it ought to be unless we had sustained economic growth. We didn't think that we could tolerate a situation where we had these huge deficits. But we also knew we had to be for things, not just against things, and we wanted to see the future being made. So we showed up out here, and we just started listening and talking to people and trying to figure out what implications for the way Government works we could find in the way the most successful companies here were working.

We also were trying to figure out whether there was some way we could actually get by the ideological debates that were paralyzing Washington, and what was then—it's amazing, but then, the Democrats were still identifying with the position that the Government was a solution to every problem, and the Republicans were identified with the position that the Government was the cause of every problem. I thought both were, frankly, somewhat arrogant, since we have a big, complicated country in which Government's interrelations with the other sectors and actors of our society are important.

So anyway, we worked on this. And then, in 1992, Al Gore and I went to the American people and asked them to give us a chance to create opportunity for all and responsibility from all and community of all Americans. We asked them to give us a chance to create a Government which was neither the

Satan nor the savior of America but a catalyst for new ideas to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives. And the American people gave us a chance. I think the results speak for themselves.

The core of it all in the beginning was trying to get our relationship to the new economy right and then try to bring more people into it. We, first of all, recognized that in a global economy, whether you were doing something new or traditional, there had to be an availability of capital at affordable interest rates. We had to do something about the deficits. And so we did it, with our crowd alone.

I told a group last night, I never will forget all those guys saying—in the Republican Party—when they were saying my economic plan would be a disaster for America, and they were not to be held responsible for any of the consequences.

To be fair to them, they did come back in '97, and we had a Balanced Budget Act that passed overwhelmingly, with both parties and both Houses. It was one of the high watermarks of the last 7 years because it proved that when we get off our high horse, we can work together to move forward to make America a better place. But we had to first get the deficit in order. And now we've got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, and the consequences are obvious.

The second thing we had to do was to expand trade. All this has been said before, but America has got 22 percent of the world's income and 4 percent of the world's population. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out somehow, some way, you have to sell something to somebody else. [*Laughter*] And I think it's, in a larger sense, the world is becoming a different place, and if you want America to have a positive impact for peace and freedom and security and prosperity, we have to be involved in the kind of networking of the world that you have made a living off of both in America and beyond our borders. It's very important.

The third thing we had to do was to make sure we were investing in the education and training of our people and our scientific and technological capacity, so that we could stay on the cutting edge of change and make sure we were preparing more people to participate in it. And in that connection, there have been some allusions—Zoe made some allusion to this, but we also worked very hard to kind of fix the Government's relationship to the emerging high-tech economy. We worked so hard in the administration on the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to make sure it was a pro-competition bill that would give people a chance to get into business, not squeeze them out; that would give new ideas and new approaches a chance to flourish, not be shriveled by people who were stepping on that. And I think the fight—it was a huge fight; it was very much a fight worth making. And I think if you look at all the new firms and all the new successes that have flown out of the '96 telecom act, and the developments in the global economy, I think it was worth doing.

We have worked hard to make the other adjustments, some of which I'll mention in a minute, including being more flexible about exports and other things. But we have tried very hard, because 30 percent of the growth of America in the last few years has come out of the high-tech sector, to get this right. And a lot of you have played a major role in that, and I thank you for that.

So, after 7 years, I think we can say that this approach works. And we've had the highest percentage of jobs created in the private sector of any modern economic recovery. We have the smallest Government in 40 years—since 1960. We have about 21 million new jobs, and as all of you know, the longest economic expansion in the history of the country. And the social fabric is getting better: The crime rate is down to a 25-year low; the welfare roll has been cut in half to a 30-year low; teen pregnancy is down; adoptions are up; test scores are up; college-going is up. The country is moving in the right direction.

And as I said in my State of the Union Address, I just want to say again today, I think the main issue in this year's election ought to be, now what? What are you going to do with this prosperity?

And I want to come back to the point we're here about today, but why are we doing all this? And it seems to me that the most important thing the American people have to decide is, do they want to use this moment to

have a good time, or would they like to have a good time by meeting the big, long-term challenges that are still manifestly out there?

You know, you know what I think. I think it's a time for dreaming big dreams and for bridging big divides and for dealing with big challenges. And I think that we have now the resources to do things as a nation we've never had before.

I think we ought to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835. I think we ought to prove that we can bring free enterprise and the information economy to the poorest nooks and crannies of America that have been left behind. I think we ought to make America the safest big nation on Earth. I think we ought to prove we can provide affordable, quality health care to all Americans. I think we ought to prove we can provide world-class education to our children, that every child can start school ready to learn, graduate ready to succeed, and go on to college, because the means are there.

I think we ought to prove that we can meet the challenge of the aging of America and take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boomers, reform Medicare, add a prescription drug coverage, which we never would have left out if Medicare were created today instead of in 1965.

I think we ought to prove we can reverse the course of climate change while we grow the economy, that you, the information economy, broke the iron chain between economic growth and putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. It is no longer necessary to do that. It is scientifically provable it is no longer necessary to do that. And we're crazy if we don't get about the business of preserving the global environment, as well as dealing with our local environmental challenges.

I think we ought to prove that we can lead the world toward greater shared peace and security and that we can build one America at home and be an example abroad for people to let go of their ethnic, their religious, their racial, their tribal, and other hatreds. That's what I think this election ought to be about, because that's what I think the future ought to be about.

You know, in my lifetime we've never had this kind of opportunity. But the point I want to make about all of this for today is that we will not be able to have an election about that or a future that's about that unless we can keep the economy growing. And you would be amazed how much time we have spent over the last several years figuring out, how do you keep this going? Because even though I think you have changed the nature of the economy, I don't believe that the silicon chip has repealed all the economic laws that govern nations. I'm not sure that you've repealed the laws of supply and demand or even totally abolished the business cycle, but I am quite sure you have made them more elastic, less predictable, and that there is more potential for sustained growth.

So we spend a lot of time thinking about, what is it that we have to do now to keep this thing going? And if I could, I'd say—the first thing I think we need to do is go back over the elements of the strategy. We cannot abandon our fiscal discipline. Now, this is an idea that will be tested in this election debate, because the Republicans now favor a tax cut bigger than the one I vetoed. And I believe that if it passes, they won't be able to keep their own promises on education, and furthermore, they will have to have massive cuts in all these things, and we'll go back to running deficits. But it will be very popular in the short run, and we're doing so well, a lot of people will want to believe we can do this. So it's a big issue the Americans will have to face. And I hate to sound like the sort of crotchety old schoolmarm, but we ought to stick with what brought us to the dance here.

And the increasing value of the Nasdaq is more important than the decreasing burden of taxes if the impact of the decreasing burden of taxes is to go back to deficits, high interest rates, an uneducated citizenry, and lower wealth creation. And we need to—this is an issue that the American people will just have to deal with.

The second thing we have to do, it seems to me, is to redouble our commitment to education, and training our own work force. And I will just say—Gray Davis has already said a great deal about this—but it seems to me the key is, we have to have a relentless focus on results.

We have learned—back in the early eighties, when I started this and Hillary and I redid the education laws in Arkansas, we had some pretty good ideas about what would work. But we weren't sure. And now there's really no excuse. There's lots and lots of research which shows what works in education. And we need a relentless focus on results, on standards, on accountability. I'm trying to get the Congress to completely change the way we give out Federal money, and only support things that we know work and stop supporting things we know don't work.

I think social promotion should be ended but not in a way that blames the kids for the failure of the system. Therefore, I think our proposal would have universal access for every kid in every troubled school in America to after-school and summer school programs, to mentoring programs, because I think it's important that we believe and prove that every child can learn. I think these things really matter.

I think that schools that are failing ought to be turned around or shut down. But I think we ought to help them be turned around, because we know, as a practical matter, they can be. You heard Gray Davis talk about this incentive program he's giving. When you give a lot—once he's given out a number of these bonuses, then people will go out and start studying the circumstances that these children were in when they started. And it's going to take your breath away when you see the adversity that a lot of these classrooms and schools have overcome. And it will reaffirm the notion that I think is broadly shared in this room, that intelligence is pretty well universally distributed and that there's a role to be played here in this.

I also want to say, we shouldn't forget the importance of technology. We have gone, now, from about, oh, 11 percent of our classrooms connected to the Internet—schools—to over 90 percent of our schools connected to the Internet today, well over half of our classrooms, thanks to a lot of you in this room and the program that we've been working on with the Vice President since '94. We shouldn't forget that.

But I just want to say to you—I believed this before I got here. I believe it, more importantly, today. I have spent an enormous amount of time in our schools over the last 21 years. These schools can be turned around, and all of our kids can learn. But you have to have high standards and genuine accountability and the right kind of support. That's what California represents. That's what I believe our national policy represents. And I hope you will continue to support them.

I also think that we're kidding ourselves if we think we can continue to move this economy forward unless we educate our people to a far higher degree, with much more flexibility. But also, as all of you know and as you have been banging on me for years, what do we do with the shortages that exist right now? Our high-tech industries do face temporary labor shortages, and they have repeatedly, at least during my experience. So we've tried to balance the short-term need to increase visas for high-skilled workers with the long-term goal of actually educating our people so that more of them from untraditional backgrounds can fill these high-wage positions.

Again, I want to thank Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren's leadership. It's been quite imaginative here. She helped our Nation to strike that balance in the past with legislation that dealt with the short-term crisis and set aside funds for education and training. And now, we've got a similar dilemma, and she and Anna Eshoo and Ellen Tauscher, representing this area, have all taken a real leadership role in trying to help us get a bipartisan solution to have more workers here, to improve the INS, to ensure that our children benefit from the technological innovation of the new economy.

I know you're all interested in this, and I wanted to talk about this, because we will get a solution here. We will work together. We will come up with sound legislation. We will find the high-tech workers you need so that we can keep growing this economy, and we will continue to prepare our children and our workers for the information age. So thank you, Zoe, and thank you, Anna, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Meanwhile, you need to keep helping Governor Davis on this education project.

Now, let me talk briefly about the China issue and trade. We've had over 270 trade agreements in the last 7 years. They have clearly boosted economic growth. Until the Asian financial crisis, 30 percent of our growth was attributed to the expansion of exports. But they have, as Zoe Lofgren said so eloquently in her remarks, the trade issue has become symbolic of people's general unease about globalization and their sense that the world is not about economics alone. It's about the fair distribution of gain. It's also about the preservation of other values, like our values opposing child labor or abusive labor conditions or our desire to see the standing of the entire global economy improve. And somehow, these trade agreements have become a lightening rod for everybody's dissatisfaction with everything, although the evidence is, the more we trade with countries and the more wealth they get, the more likely they are to elevate labor standards and improve the environment.

And I have really tried to be out there on the forefront of arguing for global efforts to integrate an approach to a global society that included labor and the environment along with economic agreements. Now, having said that, none of that is an argument for opposing China's entry into the WTO and, even more specifically, for opposing the Congress in granting permanent normal trade relations to China.

And I think that it's very important that everyone understand exactly what this is. I still talk to Members who are a little bit, I think, uncertain about exactly what this legislation does. We reached an agreement with China for the terms of their entry into the WTO. When China concludes similar agreements with other countries, it will join the WTO. But for us to benefit from the agreement that we negotiated, China must first be granted permanent normal trading status by Congress. It's the same arrangement we have with other countries in the WTO.

Now, there is a lot of controversy in Congress about this vote. And I've heard all the arguments. But I think that, I have to tell you first of all just on the trade terms, in the entire history of trade agreements, I don't believe there's ever been one this weighted in our favor, for one simple reason. This is not really a trade agreement; it's a membership agreement. It's very important that you understand. This is a membership agreement. This is China saying, "We don't have a modern, open economy. We'd like to be in this modern, open trading system. If you will let us in, here are the changes we are prepared to make." That's what this is about.

Therefore, this vote by Congress is on an agreement that lowers no American trade barriers, lowers no American tariffs, grants no greater access to China to any part of the American economy—nothing, zip, zilch, *nada,* zero. [*Laughter*] On the other hand, Chinese tariffs will fall by more than half over 5 years in every sector, from telecommunications to automobiles, to agriculture.

For the first time, American companies will be able to sell and distribute products in China without having to transfer technological know-how to Chinese firms or put manufacturing facilities overseas. For the first time, China will agree to play by the same trading rules that we follow.

Accordingly, the narrow, or broad, economic consequences are 100-0 in our favor. But I believe the moral and national security arguments also favor this decision. There is no denying, as some of the opponents of this agreement assert, that China is a one-party state, that it does not tolerate opposition, that it still denies its citizens fundamental rights of free speech and religious expression that we hold very dear. That is not the question.

The question is, what is the most intelligent thing we can do to increase the chances that China will become more open, more democratic, and a constructive member of the global community in the 21st century? I think the answer is to allow them in and to let liberty spread from within.

Under this agreement, China will slash the tariffs that protect its inefficient state-run industries, industries which the Communist Party has long used to exercise day to day control over people's lives. China's leaders feel this step is essential to maintaining their competitiveness. And they're not foolish people. They know it may unleash forces that the leaders, themselves, cannot control.

The late Chief Justice, Earl Warren, from California, a former Governor of California, said that liberty is the most contagious force

in the world. In the new century, liberty will spread, in part, by cell phone and cable modem. In the past year, the number of Internet addresses in China in one year has gone from 2 million to 9 million. This year the number is expected to grow to over 20 million. There are 1.2 billion people in China. When China joins the WTO, by 2005, it will eliminate tariffs on information technology products, making the tools of communication even cheaper, better, more widely available. American telecommunications firms and service providers are perfectly poised to fill this enormous market.

We know how much the Internet has changed America, and we're already an open society. Imagine how much it will change China. Of course, there's no question China has been trying to crack down on the Internet. Good luck. [*Laughter*] That's like that EDS ad. You remember that ad where these cowboys are trying to herd cats? [*Laughter*] That's the best ad I saw on television last year. [*Laughter*]

The very fact that the Chinese Government is trying to herd these cats shows you how real the changes are and how much they threaten the old order. They are proof that we should keep going in this direction, not that we should hold back.

Now, of course, I recognize that bringing China into the WTO is not a human rights policy in and of itself, and we have to continue to push China in every way we can to improve and observe human rights. We're pressing for a resolution at the U.N. to condemn human rights abuses in China that we object to. We urge other nations to join us.

But I think it is quite significant that the people with the greatest interest in seeing China change agree with our efforts to bring China into the world trading system. There's something almost patronizing in the opposition of some elements in the United States to China coming into the WTO, when the people they say they're trying to help believe they'll be helped if China does come into the WTO. The citizens of Taiwan, despite all their tensions with Beijing, by and large want to see China in the WTO. And so does Taiwan's newly elected leader. It's a very important point. So does Taiwan's newly elected leader.

Most evangelical Christians who have missions in China want China in the WTO. Most human rights organizations want China in the WTO. I think the more the American people learn about our agreement with China, the more they will support it. I think the more elected Representatives learn about it, the more they'll get behind it. Support is building based on the evidence.

And we have signs of that today. You heard the Governor mention the letter he's signing. Now we have over 40 of our Nation's Governors, Republicans and Democrats, in favor of granting China permanent normal trading status. And they say it will create tremendous opportunities for their companies and farmers and more high-wage American workers. In addition to Governor Davis, I want to thank Governor Locke of Washington and Governor Schafer of North Dakota for their efforts.

We've got more Members of Congress coming on board, and I thank Zoe Lofgren for the brave announcement she made today. And today I'm pleased to announce that the CEO's of over 200 high-tech firms from across our country have also signed a letter urging Members of Congress to support this legislation.

In their letter, the CEO's say, "This vote is an absolute priority for high-tech companies, and the most critical vote Congress will take on high technology this year." Now, here's the clincher I want to explain that I think a lot of people don't understand. If we don't vote for permanent normal trading status and China makes its agreement with Europe, they still get in the WTO. The only difference is Europe and Japan get the benefit of the deal that we negotiated.

Opposition to this—it reminds me of that old Cajun joke I learned when I was a boy. I shouldn't be telling this story, but I'm going to. [*Laughter*] But, I mean, really, this guy, Pierre, comes up to his friend Jean, and he says, "Jean, why do you have dynamite in your suit pocket? Usually you got those big expensive cigars." He said, "Yeah, but every time I do that, Raymond, he comes up to me, and he says, 'Hey, Jean,' and he hits me in the pocket. He destroys my cigars." He said, "Now you got dynamite? When you do it now you will kill yourself." He said, "I

know, but I blow his hand off." [*Laughter*] You think about it.

We made this deal, and now we say, "We take it back. We don't want it. We're going to give it to you." We made this incredible agreement. We've been working on all these problems with China for years. We can't get in the markets. We can't distribute our automobiles. We can't distribute our auto parts. We've got to have manufacturing and technology transfer. It's all gone, and now we say, "We don't want any of that. We're going to give it to the Europeans and the Japanese. Let's see if they can do a good job with the deal we negotiated."

It's very important that you understand this. The main consequence of this will be to hurt America economically and to dramatically strain our relations with China at a time when we need to maintain a positive ability to impact their conduct, to reduce strains along the Taiwan Straits, and to get the leaders in that country to imagine the greatness of their country in future terms, not yesterday's terms. This is a big deal.

It isn't like we can stop the modernization, but we can turn it into a very dark direction. Or we can run a much bigger risk. You all think about that story I told you. How many times have you done that in your life?

Now that I am in the last year of my Presidency and I'm not running for anything, I can tell you, perhaps with some greater credibility, that I think we in America generally tend to overestimate the influence we have by stiffing people, and we generally tend to underestimate the influence we have by reaching out a hand of cooperation, not in a naive way, not in a blind way, never abandoning our values. But just—what was this DLC all about in the beginning? We were sick of these partisan, rhetorical bombshells that dominated Washington politics. We thought there had to be a way to get underneath and beyond that, to join people together in constructive endeavors. And lo and behold, it worked. And it's not different in the rest of the world.

Now, all I can tell you is, I believe that if we do this, 20 years from now we will wonder why we ever had a serious debate about it. If we don't do it, 20 years from now we'll still be kicking ourselves for being so dumb. That's what I really believe. And there is no point in my being delicate about this; I think this is a big deal. And our country and my successors in office, and their ability to do the right thing by you and by our values, will turn in no small measure on how we vote on this. So I realize that in this crowd I'm preaching to the saved—[*laughter*]—but if you want America's economy to continue to grow and if you want your country to continue to be a force for peace and freedom and prosperity and to have an influence on people, to get them to give up their irrational attachment to the animosities of yesterday, we have to be willing to shoulder our burden for the future. This is part of it and, ironically, we will be one of the greatest beneficiaries by doing what is right for China and for the rest of the world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. at the Tech Museum of Innovation, to the conference entitled "New Democrats: Meeting the Challenges of the New Economy." In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Ron Gonzales of San Jose; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone; former Mayor Toni Casey of Los Altos, CA; Steve Wesley, vice president of marketing and business, and Meg Whitman, chief executive officer, eBay; Irwin M. Jacobs, chairman and chief executive officer, Qualcomm, Inc.; Eric Benhamou, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, 3Com Corp.; former National Economic Adviser Laura D'Andrea Tyson; Gov. Gray Davis of California; Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; Gov. Gary Locke of Washington State; and Gov. Edward T. Schafer of North Dakota.

Remarks to the AFL–CIO Building and Construction Trades Department Conference

April 4, 2000

Thank you. Well, the first thing I would like to say is John Podesta told me that he emceed this retirement dinner for Bob Sunday night. And then Hillary came over here for breakfast, and I just kind of got lonesome. Nobody had me come over, so I just thought I would intrude myself on your meeting. And I'm glad to be here.

I want to say I came for two reasons. First of all, I came to thank you for all the support you've given me and for all the work you've done for America and for all the people you represent. I have tried, too, to be a builder, and the builders of this country, to me, embody the best of America. So I want to thank you, because without your help and your support, none of the good things that have happened that our administration, that the Vice President and I have been part of, would have been possible.

And the second thing I wanted to do was to say a special word of thanks to Bob Georgine as he retires after 29 years. Thank you for your leadership on raising the minimum wage, on school construction, on bringing investment to the new markets of America that have been left out of our prosperity, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, and on all the issues that specifically affect your members and working people.

And I wanted to also thank you for last Labor Day, where you taught me to use an electric screwdriver. [*Laughter*] Now that I'm moving into my own home and it's 111 years old, I might need that skill again, before you know it. [*Laughter*]

Bob and I are both retiring. And at least he's doing it voluntarily. I'm term-limited. But I tell you, as we look back on the last 7 years, it has been a wonderful experience. And again I say, we could not have done it without you. What I'd like for you to do now is just take a few minutes with me and think about why we are where we are and where we need to go.

I have my politics, I suppose, partly from the way I was raised by my grandparents and my family, partly from what I've learned as a Governor in my home State of Arkansas and as President, partly from what I've observed about human affairs and human nature. But I have come to believe that there are basically two big approaches here to American politics: One is, obviously, from the bottom up; the other is from the top down. We're on the bottom-up side. The other is unite and lift against divide and conquer. I think that most of us believe the way we do because we think everyone counts, everyone ought to have a chance, everyone has a role to play in our society, and we all do better when we help each other. That's why we think everyone should have opportunity, and we should have a community of all Americans.

Now, if you think about where we are today, it seems to me that even though I love to hear you cheer for me and for where we are and what we've done, the real issue is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? You know, people can be tested in adversity, but they are also tested when times are good. When you build up a great legacy, what do you do with it? And I've worked as hard as I could for the last 7 years to try to first turn this country around. Just remember what it was like when we all—when Al Gore and I showed up here. We had high deficits. We had high interest rates. We had no job growth. We had social divisions. We had political gridlock. I've worked hard to try to turn it around. The country is moving in the right direction. What are we going to do with it? And that is the real issue.

And I would argue that you have a solemn responsibility in this election season not only to mobilize your members and their families but to reach out to the larger American community to say, "This is not a time for self-indulgence. This is a time to concentrate on our unique ability to meet the big, long-term challenges of America, for the most vulnerable among us, for the children like those children that are in this audience today." And I'd just like to begin with one—Bob alluded to it.

In the next 30 years, all the baby boomers are going to retire, and we'll only have about two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. Not two people total, but—[*laughter*]—two people. Even I couldn't get that done. [*Laughter*] Two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And so there will be a great question here. How are we going to change that? How are we going to accommodate the aging of America?

Well, I'm about to sign a bill which removes the Social Security earnings limit, so people who want to work in their later years can do so and still draw their Social Security. I think that's a good thing to do. But we also have to recognize that we're going to have

to make some changes in order for Social Security to mean, in the 21st century, what it has meant to the 20th century.

We're also going to have to make some changes in the Medicare program, which was established when President Johnson was here, to make it work in the 21st century. And I've asked the Congress, for example, to dedicate the interest savings from paying down the debt to the Social Security Trust Fund. Why? Because right now, we're paying more in Social Security taxes than we're paying out in Social Security. So as we pay the debt down, I want to take the interest savings from paying the debt down, put it in the Trust Fund. It would now allow us to add about 54 years to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund and take it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

And I hope you'll talk to the Members of Congress. I know a lot of Republicans have supported many of your issues, and you have relationships with both Republicans and Democrats. This is not a complicated deal. The only reason for the Republicans not to support this is if they want to privatize Social Security, if they can get the Congress and the White House. Now, you need to put the heat on folks to say, "We've got the money now. Let's dedicate it now to saving Social Security and taking it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation."

The other thing we have to do is to modernize Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit for our seniors on Medicare. Now, we just learned last week that Medicare, which was scheduled to go broke in 1999, last year. When I took office, they said the Trust Fund would run out of money in 1999. We have now taken it out to 2023, and I'm very proud of that. But, you know, if we were designing a Medicare program today, no one would even think about designing Medicare without prescription drug coverage.

First of all, because there's been so many dramatic advances in medication. And secondly, because, again I will say, the nature of people over 65 has changed. When Medicare was originally designed, people didn't live much longer than 65 years, typically, and this was designed for emergency care or for critical care, for hospitals and doctors. Now, any American lives to be 65 has got a life expectancy of 83.

And more and more, we need preventive care and chronic care. And more and more, that is prescription medication. No one—if we were starting all over again today, we we'd never even think about having a Medicare program that didn't provide a prescription drug component.

Now, I've just come from a meeting with the Senate Democrats, and the Senate is taking up the budget today, and the Democrats are going to try to, first of all, say we should not spend the surplus on risky tax cuts; we should first take care of our basic business. Senator Robb is going to offer an amendment today, supported by Senator Daschle, that makes this simple statement: After we modernize Medicare with an affordable, broadbased, voluntary prescription drug benefit, then we can move forward with sensible tax cuts that aren't so big they undermine our ability to save Social Security, pay down the debt, and invest in the education of our children. But first things first.

So the Senate is going to get a resolution by Senator Robb today that says, say yes to Medicare and prescription drugs and no to having a big tax cut first. So I hope you will support that.

Now, interestingly enough, a number of people in the Republican majority are saying, "Okay, well, I'll go along with the drug program as long as everybody doesn't get it. We ought to stop at the poverty level or 150 percent of the poverty level or maybe at the outer reaches, some of them 200 percent of the poverty level." Let me tell you something. They want to say that nobody with an annual income of over $16,700 should get help with this prescription drug benefit. I just think that's wrong.

If you think about it, a lot of you have parents, uncles, aunts—maybe your older brothers and sisters, that are on Medicare. If they have a $300 or $400 a month drug bill, which is not all that rare, then $16,000 is not all that much money. And since this benefit is voluntary—again I will say, I don't think a widow earning $16,000 or even $20,000 a year is less deserving of drug coverage than someone who is below the poverty line.

So I hope you will stick up for the proposition that all of our seniors should have the option of buying into this insurance program. That's what made Medicare work in the first place. That's what made Social Security work in the first place. It was a universal program that helped middle class people as well as low income people. And this is an opportunity to improve the process of aging in America in a way that is humane and decent and completely affordable. So we need your help to get prescription drug coverage in the Medicare program this year, in the right way, for all Americans.

I also want to thank you for your devotion to the welfare of people on the other end of life's age line, for your support for education and, in particular, for the work you have done to build bipartisan support for school construction and renovation.

This year I have sent a budget to the Congress which will enable us to build or modernize 6,000 schools and to repair 5,000 schools a year over the next 5 years. This is terrifically important. We've got the largest school population we've ever had. We want to have high standards and high accountability. We want to hook all these schools up to the Internet.

But there are schools in New York City that are still being heated with coal—with coal. The average age of a school building in Philadelphia is 65 years. I was in a small town in Florida, visiting an elementary school where there were 12—12—housetrailers behind the school to take the overflow of the students. One-third of our schools are in serious disrepair; a lot of them literally too old to be wired for the Internet. Other kids in trailers that need to be in modern classrooms.

This is a big issue. We've been working on it for 3 years now. This week the Department of Education released a State-by-State report, telling us that the need has grown and grown. Enrollment is growing; facilities are crumbling. Every year we fail to act the problem gets worse. I am very frustrated by those who say in the majority in Congress that this is not a national responsibility. That is not true.

I'm not trying to tell people how to build the buildings. I'm not trying to prescribe the—we're not trying to micromanage this program. But the school districts of this country do not have the money or the means right now to do what our children need. We have finally more people in the schools than we had during the baby boom generation after World War II. And we cannot expect them to learn in facilities that are unbearable and, in many cases, unwireable.

So I asked you to work with me. With your help, we actually have now a strong bipartisan school construction bill in the House. And thanks to you, largely, we have both Republicans as well as Democrats supporting this legislation in the Senate and the House. The House bill would allocate $24.8 billion to help communities build or renovate these 6,000 schools.

So now that you've gotten us some good Republican support, we have to get this to a vote. Once it became obvious on the House floor that we actually had Republicans supporting this bill and that we could pass it, then efforts were made to keep it from coming to a vote. So I say to you, there are a lot of people who believe that this year, because it's election year, should be a year where nothing gets done. And I have challenged every Member of Congress who believes that to relinquish his or her salary for a year, because we didn't get to where we are today by taking a year off. You don't get to take a year off. Nobody else gets to take a year off, and everybody's drawing a paycheck every 2 weeks. There is no reason not to continue to move forward.

Believe me, no matter how much progress we make this year, there will still be significant areas of disagreement between our Presidential candidates and between the two parties in all the congressional races. So let's show up for the American people and do what we can. There is no reason—no reason—not to pass the prescription drug benefit on Medicare and not to pass the school construction bill this year. And you can help us do it. I hope you will.

Now, I would like to close with the point with which I began, first, with a simple thank you and, second, with a reminder that this year, this election year, imposes on all of us an historic responsibility. We did not get to where we are today, with 21 million new jobs

and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever measured, highest homeownership in history, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, lowest poverty rates in 20 years, lowest crime rates in 25 years—this didn't happen by accident. It happened because we worked together, and we had the right ideas, and we were moving in the right direction. It happened because we believed in uniting our people and lifting them up and not in divide and conquer. It happened because we believed you could be pro-business and pro-labor, pro-work and pro-family, you could grow the economy and improve the environment, you could balance the budget and run a surplus and still invest more in education and give tax relief to middle income families.

A study last week said that the percentage of Federal income tax coming out of average families' incomes was the lowest in 40 years. That's why we had a unite and lift, not a divide and conquer theory, and because we kept working. And the only concern I have about this election year is that people will say, "Well, we've got the first surpluses we've had in 40 years, back to back. Things are going well. Why don't we vote for something that makes us feel good in the moment?"

And I just want you all to listen to this, particularly those of you that are about my age. In February we celebrated the fact that we had the longest economic expansion in American history. And so I had all my economic advisers in, and we were sitting around talking about it. And I said, "Well, when was the last longest economic expansion in history, before this one?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969.

Now, let me tell you what happened then. In 1964 I graduated from high school, at the peak of this economic expansion. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. Everybody thought the growth would go on forever. We had a civil rights challenge at home, but Lyndon Johnson was President. He'd united the country after President Kennedy's assassination, and people believed that the civil rights challenge would be met in the Congress and the courts, not in the streets. We were sort of involved in Vietnam, but people thought that was a long way away, and nobody dreamed it would divide the country. And people thought that we would win the cold war because our values and our system were superior, and things would just rock right along. That's what we thought in 1964.

Four years later, in this city, I graduated from college on June the 8th. It was 2 days after Robert Kennedy had been killed, 2 months and 4 days after Martin Luther King was killed. Today is the 32d anniversary of his death. It was 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President anymore, because the country was divided right down the middle over Vietnam and there were demonstrations everywhere.

It was a few weeks before Richard Nixon was elected President on one of those divide and conquer platforms. And I know a lot of you probably voted for him if you were of voting age—that age. But let me just remind you of what the message was. The message was, I represent the Silent Majority, which meant that those of us that weren't for him, we were in the loud minority. So there was "us" and there was "them." And then we had all those "us" and "them" elections.

Al Gore and I came along and said, "We want to put people first. We want to unite, not divide." But just a few weeks after that election, in 1968, boom, the longest economic expansion in American history was over.

What's the point of all that? I'm not trying to get you down. I want you to be up. There's nobody more optimistic than me in this room today. But we need to have a little humility and gratitude for this moment we're in. And we need to understand that these things can get away from us. And we need to be resolved to make the most of this. This is a moment for making tomorrows, not a moment for being distracted or indulging ourselves but for making tomorrows.

We have a chance to build a future of our dreams for our children. And the reason I told you that story about the 1960's was not only to remind you that nothing lasts forever, and you have to make the most of these things, but to tell you that, not as your President but as a citizen, I have been waiting for 35 years for my country to have this chance. And you can make the most of it.

So in everything you do this year, you remember this little story I told you. And you remember that we have the chance of a lifetime that we should be grateful for. And everyone you talk to and everyone you touch and everything you say, remind people: This is our moment for making tomorrows.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Robert A. Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL–CIO.

Remarks on Efforts To Bridge the Digital Divide

April 4, 2000

Thank you very much. First of all, Julian, I thank you for your introduction, for your remarks, and, mostly, for the power of your example. I find very often when we do these events in the White House, by the time I get up to talk, everything that needs to be said has already been said. And I certainly thank you.

I want to thank you, Senator Barbara Mikulski, for being the first Member of Congress to talk to me about the digital divide. And once I realized you were interested in it, I stopped worrying about whether we would address it—[*laughter*]—because no one will ever say no to the Senate's sparkplug of energy. I want to thank Secretary Herman for her support. And Secretary Glickman, thank you for being here. Harris Wofford, the leader of our national service movement; and Gene Sperling, my National Economic Adviser, who has pushed this whole digital divide issue so passionately.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. Over to my left, Senator John Breaux, my neighbor from the Mississippi Delta, where we are very interested in the potential of the computer and the Internet. And we just had a large delegation of House Members that have come in. They've been voting, and I'm glad they're here. I hope I have all their names, but I'd like to introduce them: Representative Maxine Waters, Representative Bart Stupak, Representative Ellen Tauscher, Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, Representative Silvestre Reyes, Representative John Larson, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, Representative Zoe Lofgren, Representative Ruben Hinojosa. Thank you all for being here. Did I get everybody? Thank you. And Elijah Cummings from Maryland—he's on the front row.

I'd also like to thank Governor Angus King from Maine for being here. He is working to create an endowment fund in Maine to provide portable computers and Internet access to all seventh graders, so they can actually be taken home.

There are many other distinguished Americans here who have worked on this. Bob Johnson, the head of BET, thank you for being here. And I want to acknowledge the presence of former Governor of West Virginia Gaston Caperton, now the head of the College Board. West Virginia, under his leadership, was the first State to provide computer access to all elementary school students. So we're glad to have you here, sir. And I thank you all for being here.

I want to talk about what we're doing now as we set the stage for the administration's third new markets tour, which will begin in the week of April the 16th. But before I begin, I would like to acknowledge two very important developments yesterday in America's ongoing fight to protect our children from the dangers of guns falling into the hands of criminals and children, one of them in Senator Mikulski's home State of Maryland.

Last night I called Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend to congratulate them and the Maryland Legislature for passing legislation requiring built-in child safety locks on new handguns, ballistics testing for new guns, and safety training for gun purchasers. And yesterday Massachusetts began enforcing tougher consumer product safety rules, banning junk guns and requiring trigger locks. Next week I'm going out to Colorado to support a citizen ballot initiative there that would close the gun show loophole.

These are all great efforts, and I think it's worth pointing out that they are bipartisan efforts in these States. Colorado, for example, Republican registration has gone up in the

last 6 or 7 years, and this ballot initiative today is overwhelmingly in the lead on the ballot. So this should not be a partisan issue in Washington, DC, if it is not a partisan issue in the rest of the country.

And again I say, I challenge the Congress to send me the commonsense gun safety legislation by April the 20th, the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy. We have to close the gun show loophole and require child safety locks and ban the importation of large scale ammunition clips that make our assault weapons ban a mockery. It requires national legislation, as well. So congratulations to Maryland and Massachusetts, and I thank the people in Colorado, but we still have to do our job here.

Now, I cannot imagine a better place for us to kick off our next chapter in the new markets effort than here in the East Room, for it was in this very room nearly two centuries ago that Thomas Jefferson and his personal aide, Meriwether Lewis, laid maps on this floor to chart the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Today we are here again to chart a new expedition, to open new frontiers of possibilities for America, the digital frontiers. Our mission is to open that frontier to all Americans, regardless of income, education, geography, disability, or race. This is a fortunate time for the United States. We have the strongest economy in our history, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years.

But we all know there are people and places that have been left behind. Over the last year I have traveled to many of these places. I have been to Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta, to the inner cities of Newark and Watts, to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Every place I have gone I have seen how we could do more to bring the benefits of free enterprise and empowerment, with private sector and community organization cooperation, for new businesses, new jobs, new training and education that will make a real difference in people's lives.

I want you to understand that while most people talk about the digital divide—and it is real, and it could get worse—I believe that the computer and the Internet give us a chance to move more people out of poverty more quickly than at any time in all of human history. That's what I believe. But it won't happen by accident. We'll have to work to make it happen.

On this upcoming new markets tour, we will focus specifically on how to pool resources to help communities get access to and take best advantage of the tools of the information age. We will visit your hometown of east Palo Alto, a community where 20 percent of the residents still live below the poverty line, to show that even in the heart of Silicon Valley there is still a substantial digital divide but that things are being done about it.

We will visit Ship Rock, New Mexico, a small town in the Navajo Nation, to demonstrate the unique challenges faced by geographically remote Indian reservations. I will speak at the influential COMDEX Conference in Chicago, where I'll talk to representatives of every major computer and Internet company in America and ask them to join our cause.

And then the following week I will go to North Carolina, where we will discuss the importance of connecting rural America to the same high-speed, broad-band networks now proliferating in metropolitan areas.

On all these stops, I will make the case that new technologies can be an incredible tool of empowerment in schools, homes, businesses, community centers, and every other part of our civic life, arguing that if we work together to close the digital divide, technology can be the greatest equalizing force our society or any other has ever known.

Imagine if computers and Internet connections were as common in every community as telephones are today, if all teachers had the skills to open students' eyes and minds to the possibilities of new technologies, if every small business in every rural town could join worldwide markets once reserved for the most powerful corporations—just imagine what America could be.

Let me say, first of all, I see Congressman Jefferson and Congressman Rush and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. There may be other Representatives, but as they come

in, I'll try to acknowledge them. There's a ton of interest in this.

Let me give you an example. You know, I just got back from India, a country of 900 million people with a per capita income of $450. We think we have challenges. But I saw what you could do there to close the digital divide, to use technology in an affirmative way.

I went to a little village in Rajasthan called Nayla—typical low income Indian village. And in the public building, the village's public building, there is a computer with software where the programs are in both English and Hindi and can be adapted to other local languages as the case may be. And the first thing I saw was a mother who had just given birth to a child come in. And they have all the public information from the Federal and State government on this computer.

So she goes—she brings up the Health Department's page on newborn babies. And there's so much visual—there's such a good visual component to this software that you could be almost illiterate and still work it. And she identifies the instructions that any new mother might want to have, and then she pushes a few buttons, and there's a printer. She prints it out, and she now has information just as good as she could get if her baby were born at the Georgetown Medical Center here, and she were going home.

Then I met with this women's dairy cooperative—keep in mind, in this little village in India, where every transaction, every time they brought milk in, it was all entered on the computer, what the fat content was, what the volume was, what the price was. And every time the milk was sold, it was entered, so that they got a regular computerized record of not only what they had put in but what they got out.

Then I went to Hyderabad, which is sort of a high-tech center of India. But in that whole State, you can now get 18 public services on the computer, on the Internet. Nobody goes to a revenue office to buy their license anymore. You can get a driver's license on the Internet. Now, Governor, if you do that, you can be Governor for life. They'll repeal the term limits, repeal everything. [*Laughter*]

My point is that you can see the potential of this for even the poorest people in the world is truly explosive. That's why we want these 1,000 computer centers out there, because we don't want to wait even for all the schools to do this right. We want adults in rural areas, in isolated areas, in poor areas, to be able to come in and access the same sort of services, and use them and get the same sort of information and access.

The potential of this is truly staggering. We need not see the digital divide as a threat. It is the greatest opportunity the United States of America has ever had to lift people out of poverty and ignorance.

But I will say again, if you look at the whole history of economic development, whenever there's a change in the paradigm, there's a divide that opens, because some people are well positioned to take advantage of the new economy. It happened when we moved from being an agricultural nation to an industrial nation. Some people are well-positioned to take advantage of it, and others aren't. So new divides always open when the dominant way of making a living in any society changes. But this empowerment tool gives us a chance not only to close the divide quickly but to actually lift poor people in a way that has never before been possible.

I just got back from northern California, and I learned that now—I met with some people from a lot of different computer companies, but the people from eBay told me that there are now 30,000 people-plus, making a living just trading on eBay, not working for the company, and that many of them used to be on welfare. So it's important that we see this not only for the problem it presents, but for the phenomenal opportunity that it presents, important that we see it not only as a way to close a gap so people don't fall further behind but a way to give people a tool that will enable them to leap further ahead. But again I say, it won't happen by accident. It requires government, business, educators, librarians, civil rights, religious leaders, labor union leaders—thank you, Mr. Bahr, for being here today—community-based organizations, foundations, volunteers. Everybody has got to work together.

Today I want to issue a national call for action on digital opportunity, to help us

achieve two vitally important goals. First, to bring 21st century learning tools to every school. That means we have to finish the job of connecting every classroom to the Internet, ensuring that all students have access to multimedia computers, creating more high quality educational software, helping all teachers learn how to make the best use of these tools. And this is very important.

Again, I want to thank the Members of Congress here who have supported our efforts in the aftermath of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, to create the E-rate, which has made it possible for the schools, no matter how poor they are, to have access to the Internet.

The second goal is to expand efforts far beyond our schools, to give every citizen Internet access at home, by bringing technology centers and high-speed networks to every single community, by helping adults to gain the skills to compete for IT jobs, and inspiring more people to appreciate the great value of getting on line.

Today is the opening of this national call to action. More than 400 organizations already have signed the pledge, and this is just the beginning. For the rest of the year we will try to inspire hundreds, indeed, thousands, more to sign up. We will work with Congress across party lines to build support for budget and legislative initiatives to meet these goals. And you heard Senator Mikulski outline some of them. We have to be willing at the national level to do our part. This is a worthy Federal investment.

During the new markets tour, we'll have an opportunity to announce many commitments tied to this call to action. Today I'd just like to review four of them, all of them vivid illustrations of the kind of visionary partnership and barn-raising spirit that we are working to foster.

First, to reprieve something Senator Mikulski mentioned, AmeriCorps will make an enormous contribution to closing the digital divide by marshaling the power of active citizen volunteers. Thanks to the leadership of Senator Mikulski and Harris Wofford, AmeriCorps is committing $10 million to recruit 750 new members to serve in a brand-new E-Corps. The E-Corps will be a large battalion of volunteers, trained and devoted exclusively to projects like providing technical support to school systems and teaching computer literacy to adults and children.

The Corporation for National Service will also unleash the power of students helping students by providing funds to allow 90,000 high school students to get involved in digital divide projects as part of their educational curriculum.

Most young people I know can run circles around me and most people my age when it comes to computers and the Internet. AmeriCorps is going to tap their capacity so that they can help others in their communities to close the digital divide.

Second, to help get AmeriCorps' E-Corps off to a running start, Yahoo will donate a million dollars in Internet advertising to attract potential E-Corps members with high-tech skills.

Third, in partnership with the YWCA, 3Com is launching an innovative initiative called NetPrep GYRLS—g-y-r-l-s. Currently less than 30 percent—listen to this—less than 30 percent of our computer scientists and programmers are women. NetPrep GYRLS will help to right this imbalance offering free computer network training and certification to hundreds of high school girls across our country.

Fourth, the American Library Association has pledged to greatly expand the information literacy programs of its members in at least 250 communities. So this is just the beginning, but I want to thank the people who were involved for these four initiatives. There will be many more, but I thank you very much.

I've heard Harris Wofford, who worked with Martin Luther King and who was in Selma with me the other day and was in Selma 35 years ago, when the first march took place, say that making sure all young Americans share in the opportunity and promise of America is the unfinished business of the civil rights movement.

It is appropriate that we are meeting here on this subject 32 years to the day after Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis. He was there working to lift the economic fortunes of disadvantaged people. I think if he were with us today, he would

therefore say closing the digital divide is a righteous cause.

In his last Sunday sermon, he ended with a prayer that said, "God grant us all a chance to be participants in the newness and magnificent development of America." That's what this is all about. We need more people Julian. We need more people like you, not only clapping for people like Julian but helping them to live their dreams.

We do that when we help young people, when we help seniors in rural America get medical advice over the Internet, when we create tools that allow people with disabilities to open new doors of possibility. We give our neighbors a chance to participate in this astonishing American renaissance. We have done something that would have made Dr. King proud. And the new technology of the digital age gives us a chance to do it for more people, more quickly, more profoundly, than at any time in human history. It's up to us to seize that opportunity.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to computer skills teacher and website developer Julian Lacey, who introduced the President; Harris Wofford, Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service; Robert L. Johnson, chairman and chief executive officer, BET Holdings, Inc.; Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland; and Morton Bahr, president, Communication Workers of America.

Statement on Maryland State Action on Gun Safety Legislation

April 4, 2000

Last night the Maryland Legislature took an important step forward to address the problem of gun violence by passing commonsense gun legislation. I commend the Governor and the legislature for their efforts to enact key gun safety measures that will, among other things, require built-in child safety locks on handguns, ballistics testing for newly manufactured handguns to help solve more gun crimes, and safety training for handgun purchasers.

Maryland joins a growing number of States across the country that are taking actions to make guns safer and to keep guns out of the wrong hands. The Congress should follow their lead and make passage of commonsense gun legislation its top priority. I challenge the Congress to enact gun safety legislation before the one-year anniversary of the Columbine tragedy on April 20th.

Statement on the Democratic Amendment to the Budget Resolution

April 4, 2000

Today the Senate begins its work on its budget and, in so doing, will lay out its investment and reform priorities for the FY 2001 budget. The Senate Democrats, under the leadership of Senator Robb and Senator Daschle, will be offering an amendment to this budget resolution designed to put America's priorities in order. This amendment insists that we do first things first and modernize Medicare with an affordable, accessible, and voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit for all seniors. Once we've done that, we can move forward with a sensible tax cut.

I commend the supporters of this amendment because I believe it reflects good policy, the will of the American people, and addresses a long-standing unmet need. We should not be recklessly spending money on an excessive tax cut before we take action to ensure that all seniors have the potentially life-saving choice of a prescription drug benefit. It is my hope that every Member of the Senate will support this critically important amendment.

Statement on Senate Inaction on the Supplemental Budget Request

April 4, 2000

I am very disappointed that Senator Lott plans to deny prompt consideration of the urgent and essential needs in my 2000 supplemental request, including helping victims of Hurricane Floyd, providing energy assistance for families struggling with rising oil prices, helping keep illegal drugs out of our country by supporting the Colombian Government's fight against drug traffickers, and

building peace and stability in Kosovo to support the efforts of our troops there without jeopardizing our current state of military readiness worldwide. It is also essential to provide debt relief for the world's poorest nations undertaking economic reforms so that they can join the global economy.

I firmly believe that any action to delay consideration of these pressing needs would impose unnecessary costs to Americans at home, to our interests abroad, and to our military readiness around the world. Therefore, I urge the Senate to consider the interests of the Nation and to move ahead quickly with work on these urgent and essential needs.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

April 4, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 19(3) of the Public Telecommunications Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–356), I transmit herewith the report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 4, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Patrick J. Leahy

April 4, 2000

Thank you. Well, first, let me say to Bobby and Solange, thank you for having us in your home. I actually came to hear you sing, Emmylou, so you've got sing for me when I finish.

I want to thank Pat and Marcelle for being wonderful friends to me and to Hillary during our sojourn here in Washington. I may have been younger than you when I got here, but I'll be older when I leave. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Senator Reid for being here; my great friend and former Senator DeConcini, thank you, sir, for being here.

I want to thank all of you for being here for Pat Leahy. I have been in public life now for more than 25 years. I have, among other things—when I was a Governor, I served with over 150 Governors. I have known hundreds of Members of Congress. And I think that Pat Leahy is one of the ablest and most visionary legislators and one of the finest people I have ever served with in 25 years of public life.

And Mr. Axworthy, I appreciate your being here, but you can't have him. [*Laughter*] And he, also, by the way, tells a pretty good joke now and then. [*Laughter*]

I'll be very brief. I think the American people are going to be tested this year in this election season and in the years ahead, because of our prosperity and because all the social indicators appear to be going in the right direction. Normally, democracies can be summoned to any sacrifice or difficult decision when people are evidently under the gun. And sometimes, therefore, they are most at risk of making foolish choices or going in the wrong direction when things seem to be going very well. In that way, groups of free people are like individuals. Most of us who are over 30, anyway, can recall at least one time in our lives when we made a serious mistake, not because things were going so poorly but because things seemed to be going so well.

And I say that because I think there really are very clear choices now between the direction that someone like Pat Leahy would take in his work for peace, for the health of our children, for the health of our environment, for research or a whole range of issues, and the choice that the majority in Congress would take or their nominee for President would take.

Yet, it may seem to many voters that, oh well, there may not be much difference; things are rocking along here; the economy is on automatic. And I think it's very important that people like you get together to help people like Pat Leahy. I also think it's very important that you be able to tell your friends and neighbors, who never come to political events like this, why you came and what the stakes are.

And I'm old enough now where I remember things sometimes I wish I didn't remember. I was in this city 32 years ago today, when Martin Luther King was killed in Memphis. And I remember it. I was in this

city 32 years ago driving down Massachusetts Avenue, 32 years ago 5 days ago, when Lyndon Johnson told us he couldn't run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war.

What does all that have to do with this? In February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history. So I had all my economic team in, and we were celebrating, and we were happy. And we were happy because we also had a 20-year low in poverty, a 30-year low in unemployment, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. It was a wonderful time.

And we were talking about the State of the Union Address, where I kept saying we've got to do these big things now, these big things. And I said, "Hey, just for my information, when was the last longest economic expansion in American history?" And it turns out it was between 1961 and 1969. And I will go back to what I said in the beginning, how you're in danger, when things seem to be going well, of breaking your concentration and not making good decisions, not just individuals but nations.

I graduated from high school in 1964, when there was low inflation, low unemployment, high growth, and we thought it would go on forever. Lyndon Johnson had united the country after President Kennedy's tragic assassination, and we thought then the civil rights challenges of America would be handled in the courts, in the Congress, not in the streets. We knew that we had a few people in Vietnam, but nobody thought we'd have over 500,000 or that 58,000 would die or that it would tear the country apart.

And then 4 years later, all this stuff I just told you started to happen, so that by the time I graduated from college at Georgetown on June 8th, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, and the city burned, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. And a few weeks after that, President Nixon was elected on the first, sort of, divide-and-conquer campaign of the modern era. He represented the Silent Majority, which means people like me were in the loud minority. It was "us" and "them." And just a few months after that, the longest economic expansion in American history was history.

Now, I am very optimistic; I'm the most optimistic person in this room. But what I want to tell you is, I have a memory, and I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position once again to be free to build the future of our dreams for our children, to be responsible citizens of the world, to lead the world toward peace and freedom and security. That's what this is all about. And we can't afford to let a single American treat this election in a casual fashion because of the evident responsibilities we have and because of the opportunities we have.

I know Pat Leahy is not on the ballot this year, but I'm glad you're out here helping him, because I told you the truth. In 25 years, he's one of the finest people and one of the ablest, most visionary public servants I've ever known. That's what you need to think about all year long. And tomorrow if people ask you why you came here, you need to be able to give them this answer. And if you're around my age, you need to remind them of what happened to the last longest economic expansion in American history, when we were casual and careless enough to think it was on automatic. There's nothing we can't do. But we have to work at it, and we have to work together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Robert Muller and Solange MacArthur; singer Emmylou Harris; Marcelle Leahy, wife of Senator Leahy; former Senator Dennis DeConcini; Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy of Canada; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

April 4, 2000

Thank you. First of all, let me say, Carol, I am very grateful for those words and for your friendship, and I thank you and David for opening your beautiful home. Nancy, thank you for being my true friend, and I thank you and Harold for being here.

People are always asking me what I am going to do when I leave office. I think tonight would be an appropriate time for me to make the announcement: David and Harold and I are going to open a consulting firm for political spouses. [*Laughter*] We're reasonable but not free. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Joe Andrew, who came out here from Indiana and gave us a real boost of energy. He took over the leadership of the Democratic Party when most people thought it was not much of a prize. And then we got Ed Rendell to come help us, and a number of other people. But Joe was there, working day-in and day-out, and he was indefatigable, and he was enthusiastic when even someone as optimistic as me wasn't sure he should be enthusiastic. So we owe you, and we're grateful, and we thank you.

I want to thank all the people here in our administration family: Carrie, thank you for being here; Minyon; and I thank Molly Raiser for being here, my former Protocol Chief; and Ann Lewis, who has defended me better than anyone else—I think—just about—on television consistently, which is a job from time to time. [*Laughter*]

I would like to make two or three points about why I think what you've done is important and why I want to urge you to continue to support the Democratic Party, to broaden our base, to reach out to new people, and to be especially vigilant in this election year.

First of all, there is a real difference between these two parties. There is a difference on specific issues. Look at what we're debating today: gun safety. Last night I called Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend in Maryland to congratulate them on passing their legislation regarding child safety locks and other protections. It didn't have anything to do with people hunting in Maryland. They'll still have a duck hunting season this fall in Maryland—I'll bet you anything. And all the dire predictions of the NRA will be wrong, but kids will be safer. Massachusetts did the same thing.

We're different: We think we ought to close the gun show loophole. We think if you buy a handgun at a gun store and you have to get your background checked, if you go to a gun show on the weekend, you ought to do the same thing.

And it reflects—and we believe in child safety locks, and we believe in building safe guns that can only be fired by the adults who buy them. We believe in banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which make a mockery of the assault weapons ban. And there are differences there.

We're different on the Patients' Bill of Rights. I don't oppose managed care myself; I think it's saved America a lot of money. But I think that, ultimately, health care decisions ought to be made by medical professionals and the patients themselves. And I think that this system ought to be priced and structured to support that. So we're for that, and we still can't get it out of this Republican Congress. We're for a minimum wage increase, and they're not. These are just the things that are being debated today.

Look at their budget. We're for continued big investments in education, hiring more teachers in the early grades, repairing 5,000 schools a year, building or doing major reconstruction on another 6,000 so that we can have excellent facilities. And they don't support that.

We're for a tax cut that is affordable and is targeted to what real working families need. We want to increase the earned-income tax credit because we think low income working people with kids ought to not have their children in poverty. We want to increase the child care tax credit. We want a $3,000-a-year long-term care tax credit, because so many people are having to take care of their parents or their disabled relatives. We think the cost of college tuition ought to be tax deductible, because we think 4 years of college ought to be universal. That's our tax program. Theirs is a lot bigger and a lot different, and most of you in this room would be better off under theirs than ours in the short run. You are here because you disagree with that, because you want us to go forward together. So the first thing I want to say is, there's a difference.

The second point I want to make is, it's not like we don't know which one works. That's the amazing thing. This ought to be an easy election for the American people, because their nominee for President, even

though he says he is for education, is for a tax cut even bigger than the one I vetoed. And all of them have endorsed him, so you would have to conclude that they are serious.

I vetoed a tax cut last year because it would force us to run deficits again, and we could never save Social Security and Medicare, and we couldn't increase investment in education and science and technology and all of these things. So now, they are going to the American people saying that "President Clinton made a mistake. He doesn't know what he is doing in his economic program, and the Vice President is wrong, their nominee. Elect us, and we'll give you an even bigger tax cut than the one he vetoed."

Now, they also are going to appoint between two and four members to the Supreme Court. And they are clearly on record as being against *Roe* v. *Wade* and wanting to reverse it. And there are big differences on the environment; there are big differences on all these other issues.

Now, what I want to say to you is, it is not like you don't know which one is right. It's not like the American people don't know. We've got now—we have 8 years of doing it our way after 12 years of doing it their way. And you can look at the difference in the consequences. You have got to be able to tell people this in real blunt terms. There is an economic difference, and you have evidence. There is a social difference.

They were against—my goodness, most of them were against the family medical leave law. They said it would really hurt the small business economy. We've got 21 million new jobs, and 21 million people are taking advantage of family and medical leave. And I think you could argue it's made our economy stronger, because having people secure at work, knowing they can also be responsible in their family life, is a good thing, not a bad thing.

So there is a different economic policy. There is a different social policy. By and large, they were against our 100,000 police. They were against the Brady bill, against the assault weapons ban, except for a handful of them. Now we've had evidence: We now have half a million felons, fugitives, and stalkers couldn't get handguns under the Brady bill. We've got a 25-year low in crime, a 30-year low in gun crime. So the question is, are we going to build on our successes, or change course?

We have proved that you can improve the environment and grow the economy. We've got cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food. And now we want to take on the big challenges like global warming and getting us a more secure energy future, which the American people should want after this last scare with the oil prices.

But if you look at what I've had to deal with since 1995—and they are trying to weaken our environmental protections and impose further burdens on our ability to protect the environment— they think that's what is necessary to grow the economy. Now, it's not like—we don't have any excuses here. We know, we've tried it their way; we've tried it our way.

We've got a stronger economy and a cleaner environment. So point number one: There are big differences. Point number two: We've had a test run, a long test run, 12 years for them, 8 years for us. The results are better under our way.

Now, the third point I want to make, to me, is more important than that. And it goes beyond just whether the country is better off, to the larger question of, how do you want to live, and how do you want to relate to each other and to the rest of the world?

Basically, I think the reason we have succeeded is that we've had a good philosophy that works, that everybody counts; everyone should have a chance; everyone has a responsible role to play; we all do better when we help each other. Simple ideas: They work.

We had a big press conference today—a couple of you there—on closing the digital divide. It's an empowerment device that I think is very important. I think the computer and the Internet—yes, they could make American society more divided, but they give us the chance—the chance—to lift more people out of poverty more quickly than ever before in all of human history. Not only in the United States, but all around the world—if we do it right.

But we have to be governed by the right philosophy, the right values. And that is weighing on my mind a lot. A lot of you have been hearing me talk about this—you know

it is. But I believe that our attitude, our basic approach to life and public life and citizenship, determines in large measure how we make the most of this world we are living in.

I'm very grateful—I went this morning—I started off the day at the building trades, and there were 2,500 people there. And Bob Georgine, the head of the union, is retiring after 29 years. And it was wonderful, and they were all saying "Thank you very much." And it was great for me. You know, you always want to think one or two people will miss you when you are gone.

But the truth is, I feel much more strongly about what we are going to do with this election and with our future than I do about the achievements of this administration for the last 7 years, and what I am going to get done in this last year, because I've worked very hard to try to help the American people turn the country around.

But this is what counts, because now we are in a position to really take all this success and do big things with it. We can get the country out of debt for the first time since 1835. We can make sure no kids grow up in poverty. We can give every child a world-class education. We can deal with the challenge of climate change, deal with our energy security, and actually create jobs doing it. We can bring economic opportunity to the places and people that have been left behind. We can be a stronger force for peace and freedom throughout the world because of all this success we've had. We can make America the safest big country in the world. There are big, big things we can do.

We can save Social Security and Medicare for all the baby boom generation. Big things. But we have to have the right attitude. We have to really believe that everybody matters; everybody ought to have a chance; everybody has a responsible role to play; we all do better when we help each other. We've got to really believe that. And we've got to act on it. That's what this whole election is about.

It's weighing on my mind now, because today is the 32d anniversary of Martin Luther King's death. Five days ago was the 32d anniversary of Lyndon Johnson telling us he couldn't run for President again because the country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war.

Now, I'm not trying to be a downer for any of you; there is not a more optimistic person than me in this house tonight. But I'm telling you this to make you sober, because we're celebrating the longest economic expansion in history. And in February, when it happened, and we were all patting ourselves on the back—probably a little too much—I asked my economic team when the last longest economic expansion in history was, and they said, 1961 to 1969.

And I remember it very well, because I was coming of age. And when I finished high school in 1964, we had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. We thought, oh, this thing is going to go on forever. We had President Johnson uniting the country; ex-President Kennedy had been killed; we thought he was going to get rid of poverty, we thought all the civil rights problems would be handled in the Congress and the courts and not in the streets. We thought everything would be fine.

And a couple of years later—so I come to Georgetown, to college, this big-eyed kid, believed in America and promise of America, and living the American dream, and everything was going to be great. And all of a sudden, we've got riots in the streets, and people are fighting over the Vietnam war.

And by the time I graduated from college, it's 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed and 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, and 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson couldn't run for reelection. And a few weeks before President Nixon was elected on a very different idea from the idea I just gave you.

My idea is unite and lift; theirs was divide and conquer. That's what the Silent Majority was all about. Do you remember the Silent Majority? If you weren't part of it, you were part of the loud minority. That was me. [*Laughter*] I remember that. But it was "us" and "them," not "us" together. And just a few weeks after that election, poof, the longest economic expansion in American history was history, over.

Now, what's that got to do with today? Well, today, we're blessed. We have less internal crisis and external threat, but we're not free of those things. And all of life, every

day is a gift. We should be humble, humble in the face of this great prosperity of ours and absolutely determined to make the most of it.

So what I want you to do—thank you for your money. Thank you for helping us to be able to compete. And don't be discouraged when you see they have more than we do. It doesn't matter; they out-spent us $100 million in '98, and we won anyway—in historic terms. All that matters is that we have enough to get our message out. But you need to be messengers. You need to say, "I'm for them, because there are differences between these two parties." You don't have to bad-mouth them, you don't have to demonize them. You don't have to do what they so often do.

You just have to say, "Look, there are differences between these two parties, and I agree with our position on the economy, on crime, on social justice, on individual rights, on the concept of community. I'm for hate crimes legislation. I'm for the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act." I don't believe we ought to single out racial minorities or women or gays or anybody else and run them out of our community; as long as they're law-abiding citizens, they ought to be protected and be a part of our future." There are differences, number one.

Number two, we tried it their way; we tried it our way. Our way is better. We've got the evidence. We've got a stronger economy, a cleaner environment, a lower crime rate, a more cohesive society, and a strong role in the world for peace and freedom.

Number three, this can get away from us, and we have to make the most of it. And the most important thing of all is how we feel about ourselves and one another. And we really do believe we all do better when we help each other. So we don't want to go back to divide and conquer; we're for unite and lift.

I've waited for 35 years for a day like this. I'm sorry I won't be around to keep on doing it. [*Laughter*] But I'm quite confident that if we make the right decisions in this election, the best days of this country are ahead.

The thing that matters is not all that we have done. The thing that really matters is what will we do with it and whether we'll all benefit. That's why I'm a member of this party. That's why I'm here tonight, and why I implore you to be messengers every day between now and November.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:29 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Carol and David Pensky; Nancy Zirkin, director of government affairs, American Association of University Women, and her husband, Harold; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Director of Presidential Scheduling Correspondence Carrie Street; Assistant to the President and Director of Political Affairs Minyon Moore; Counselor to the President Ann F. Lewis; Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Robert A. Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL–CIO.

Remarks at the First Session of the White House Conference on the New Economy

April 5, 2000

The President. Thank you, and good morning. I want to welcome all of you here for this conference. Let's get right to work.

We meet in the midst of the longest economic expansion in our history and an economic transformation as profound as that that led us into the industrial revolution. From small businesses to factory floors to villages half a world away, the information revolution is changing the way people work, learn, live, relate to each other in the rest of the world. It has also clearly changed the role of Government and how it operates.

This conference is designed to focus on the big issues of the new economy: How do we keep this expansion going? How do we extend its benefits to those still left behind in its shadows? What could go wrong, and how do we avoid it? That's what I hope this conference will be about.

The roots of this meeting stretch back to our first economic conference in December of 1992 in Little Rock, shortly after I was elected President. Then, some of the leading minds from around the country and across the economic spectrum addressed a challenge that, to all Americans, was immediate

and clear: Unemployment was high; interest rates were high; the deficit was exploding; the debt had quadrupled; even an apparent recovery was generating no jobs; and inequality had been increasing for well over a decade.

Thanks to a strategy designed to bring down the deficit and convert it into surpluses, to expand trade, to invest in education, training, and technology, and to establish conditions in which the new economies could flourish, especially in the Telecommunications Act, which was passed about 4 years ago now, the American people, American entrepreneurs, have given us a remarkable recovery.

The performance of the new economy has been powered by technology, driven by ideas, rooted in innovation and enterprise. It has opened doors of opportunity and challenged our very understanding of economics. I remember sitting around a table in Little Rock in 1992, asking my economic advisers how low unemployment could get without triggering inflation. The consensus was somewhere between 5½ percent and 6 percent.

Now, bear in mind, these were people who were philosophically committed to low unemployment and were willing to resolve doubts in favor of it. No one believed then we could have 4 percent unemployment on a sustained basis without inflation. No one believed that this economy could generate productivity rates of more than 2 percent a year on a consistent basis. Now, we're nearly at 3.

There is no single answer about how this happened. I think, clearly, the nature of the new economy and the strength of the American entrepreneurial system led the way. The fact that many of our traditional industries and workers increased their productivity played a role. I also believe the Government's commitment to fiscal discipline, to expanded trade, to investment in people and technology, and to cutting edge research—and again I say, to establish the conditions in which the new economy could flourish—played a large role as well.

Now, one of the things that I think is important to focus on is just some basic facts. Information technology today represents only 10 percent of American jobs, but is responsible for about 30 percent of our economic growth. It accounts now for about half of business investment. And just as Henry Ford's mass-produced cars and the assembly line itself had broad spillover effects on the productivity of the American economy, these new technologies are doing the same thing, rifling through every sector of our economy, increasing the power of American firms and individuals to share broadly in its prosperity.

Today, information technologies allow industries to recognize, instantaneously, changes in demand and to manage their inventories more efficiently and quickly. They are speeding the development of new products to market. Supercomputers, for example, have helped Detroit automakers cut the development times of new cars by half or more. They've helped pharmaceutical companies cut down the development time for new anticancer drugs by several years.

Clearly, they will have a profound effect, information technologies, in biomedical sciences in the 21st century, as we see by the simple fact that in the next few weeks, we will announce for the first time the complete sequencing of the human genome, something that will have been literally impossible without information technology. And of course, just contemplating the potential impact of nanotechnology on the biological sciences alone staggers the imagination.

Information technology clearly is also creating a lot of more mundane opportunities in E-commerce for traditional businesses, as well as the .com companies. And business-to-business E-commerce is growing even faster than business-to-customer commerce. In 3 years, it may reach a staggering $1.3 trillion in the United States alone.

We know all of this is just the beginning. So now we want to share the best ideas and ask the right questions. Economists, for example, like to talk about speed limits for the economy: Do we have higher speed limits today? Do they exist anymore? How do we measure the impact of technology in this economy? What will be the sources of tomorrow's growth?

We know when it comes to education that the right teacher and the right computer can give a student in the poorest neighborhood the same access to every library and every

source of information as a student in the most privileged private school. But those who are left out will be left further behind. How do we close the digital divide? Can poor areas in the United States and entire developing nations leapfrog an entire stage of development, jumping ahead to cutting-edge technologies, avoiding not only the time it takes to go through the industrial economy but also the unpleasant side effects, particularly of pollution and global warming. How can we best make that happen? How important is information technology relative to other pressing needs of developing nations, such as health or education or improving agricultural productivity? Or do they go hand-in-hand?

Technology can allow nations to grow their economy without harming the environment. How do we convince people around the world, and even in the United States, that this is true?

I believe the computer and the Internet give us a chance to move more people out of poverty more quickly than at any time in all of human history. I believe we can harness the power of the new economy to help people everywhere fulfill their dreams. On my recent trip to South Asia, I saw the beginnings—just the beginnings—of that potential.

But it is clear that none of our hopes for the new economy—which are really hopes for a better society, one in which we are brought together, not driven apart; one in which we sustain our Earth, not exploit it; one in which we lift up the poor, as well as those of us who are better off—that these developments will not just happen. They, too, will take new ideas, new initiatives, new innovation, the kind of thing that so many of you have done for so many years now. I thank you for being here. I thank you for being part of this dialog. And I'd like to get started.

Our first panel discussion is entitled, "Is the New Economy Rewriting the Rules on Productivity and the Business Cycle?" And I'd like to ask Abby Joseph Cohen, chair of the investment policy committee at Goldman Sachs, to begin.

Thank you very much.

[*At this point the first panel discussion began, and the President called on several of the participants.*]

The President. Thank you. I promised myself I wasn't going to inject myself into this until we—[*laughter*]—until we heard from everybody. But I just want to throw out two or three questions, because I want to get—after we hear from the panelists, I want Secretary Summers and our CEA Chair, Martin Baily, to say a few words. And then I want to have some questions.

But just—all of you have raised a couple of issues. Let me just ask you to think about this, everybody. On this question of the business cycle, we've had, since the Second World War and before the information technology revolution, generally a trend of longer expansions and shorter recessions. So that's, presumably, the product of generally better economic management. Is there something inherent in the technology revolution, as Professor Romer at Stanford and others have argued, that basically, if it doesn't repeal the business cycles, it makes them far more elastic even than better economic management would warrant?

The second thing I think worth questioning is, have we avoided inflation due to wage demands because workers are smarter than they used to be and they understand that they're in a global economy and they can't ask for more than their company's profits will warrant?

And the third thing I wanted to just ask you to think about, since I was hoping Professor Galbraith would raise this question of whether I was making a mistake to try to get us out of debt, because some of my good friends have accused me of practicing Calvin Coolidge economics—let me tell you what my reasoning is, and I just want you all to think about this, because I'm prepared to have somebody say I'm wrong about this.

The reason that I wanted to continue to pay down the public debt is that private debt in this country is so high, both individual and business debt, and I worry in the same way you do about that coming down not only on individual firms and families but also on the economy as a whole. So I figured what really matters is the aggregate savings rate or the aggregate debt-to-wealth ratio, and if I can

keep bringing down the public debt, we could keep interest rates down and at least lengthen the time between now and some darker reckoning on that.

So the reason that I always thought it was important to pay down the public debt, once we got into surplus, is that private borrowing is so high in this country. And the debt-to-wealth ratio is not bad at all, because of the value of the markets. But still, the individual and firm debts are quite high. So I was trying to get the aggregate balance right, and that's been my logic all along and why I think it's different from previous times when, I admit, the Government's been in surplus when it should not have been.

Professor Nordhaus.

[*William D. Nordhaus, a professor of economics at Yale University, made brief remarks, and the panel discussion continued.*]

The President. Thank you. They did a great job, didn't they? Let's give them all a hand. Thank you.

I would like now to ask Secretary Summers, and our CEA Chairman, Martin Baily, to make a few brief remarks, and then I will open to the audience and the panel for discussion.

Larry?

[*Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you very much. Anybody in the audience like to make a comment or ask a question to any of our panelists? Yes, ma'am. If you could stand and identify yourselves, and then I'll just move around the room as best I can.

[*At this point, the question-and-answer portion of the session began.*]

The President. I would just like to make a couple of observations just very briefly about this. Even though the participation of women in the labor force is the highest it has ever been, the unemployment rate among women is the lowest in 40 years. That's the good news. The bad news is there is still about a 25 percent pay gap.

The unemployment rate among African-Americans and Hispanics is the lowest we've ever recorded, although we've only been disaggregating it for, I think, just a little less than 30 years. But still, it's much lower. But the per capita income is still quite—there's a lot of difference.

The poverty rate has gone down dramatically among African-Americans and Hispanics but not as much for Hispanics as African-Americans—I suspect because we have more first generation immigrants coming in still, who are classified as Hispanics in all this data collection that we do.

I would just like to posit—first of all, my sense is—and I've fought this battle hard for all these years—that the opposition to affirmative action is easing again, as the middle class members of the majority feel a little more secure. But what I am interested in is, how do we take these hopeful numbers and sort of translate them into genuine economic parity?

For example, we're debating in the Congress now how much we ought to raise the cap for the H–1B visas, basically to get the high-tech workers in the Silicon Valley into the Washington, DC, area and other places. And I basically—I'm a pro-immigration person, generally. I think it's made our country stronger, and I'm not against this. But we don't still have, in my judgment, a comprehensive enough strategy to move a lot of African-Americans and Hispanics who are in the work force now—so they have X level of education, but they're not yet in the new economy, so that they're fully participating.

And I think this is still a continuing challenge for us. Two years ago African-American high school graduation rates equaled white graduation rates for the first time in history. That's the good news, and all these things you've said are absolutely right. But we're still not there on college-going, college graduation, and participation in the new economy. And we need a lot of focus on it.

The second question you asked is, what happens the next time there's a recession? I'd like to point out, if I might defend the position I took, briefly, in welfare reform, we basically—welfare reform, in terms of the money that welfare recipients got, was already a State-determined entitlement before welfare reform, because the States got to set how much they were given. So the rate for

a family of three varied everywhere from $187 a month, roughly, in Mississippi, and about that much in Texas, to $655 a month in Vermont, before welfare reform.

We kept the national requirement for food stamps and for medicine. And what we're trying to do is find more efficient ways to move people into the work force. We have done that. The great unanswered question is, if there is high unemployment again, what do we do with the work requirements and how do we make sure people get a good income stream when they literally can't go into the work force? And that's a challenge that will have to be addressed. But the tools are there to do it.

Yes?

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. Since we want to hear from everybody, I can't possibly answer the education question, but I will give you one sentence on it. Every problem in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. There are public schools performing at an astonishing level with children from very diverse backgrounds, in terms of income, race, ethnicity, and first language.

The big challenge in American education is nobody has figured out a mechanism to make what works in a lot of places work everywhere, which is why we're trying to change the law to stop giving out Federal money to people who don't produce results and spend it based on things that we know will work.

This is not a cause for despair. There are success stories everywhere, under breathtakingly difficult circumstances. The problem is, we haven't figured out how to replicate it, or we don't have enough incentives to replicate it. And that ought to be something that we focus on, plus bringing opportunity out there. In New York City, you've got kids going to school in buildings that are heated by coal. We have schools that are too old to be wired for the Internet. We've got a lot of physical problems, and we have to continue to invest in. But we are moving on that.

On the patent thing, you know, Tony Blair and I crashed the market there for a day, and I didn't mean to. [*Laughter*] But I think what happened is—when the market's recovered, I think what happened is people actually read the statement instead of the headlines, or whatever.

I think in the biotech area, our position ought to be clear. General information ought to be in the public domain as much as possible about the sequencing of the human genome. And where public money contributed to massive research on the basic information, we ought to get it out there. If someone discovers something that has a specific commercial application, they ought to be able to get a patent on it. And the question is always going to be, are you drawing the line in the right place? But I believe we've got the people together with the skills and the experience to draw the line in the right place. And I think that's the right policy. I'm quite confident it is. And what we really need now is to make sure it is implemented in the right way.

Fred? And then we'll just keep going.

[*C. Fred Bergsten, director, Institute for International Economics, made brief remarks, and the question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. If I could just make one comment about this. I'm worried about it, the size of the trade deficit. But I would like to just make two counter arguments that you should all consider.

There is no question in my mind that the openness of our markets in the last 7 years has kept inflation down and enabled us to grow more. And I could give you lots of very specific examples when we began to see tightening of supplies and various products and services where there would be a little spike, and it would come down.

The second thing is, we had a very strong economy, stronger—more growth than our friends in Europe and Japan did, both at the time of the Mexican crisis, which imperiled all of Latin America, and at the time of the Asian financial crisis. Now, I think those things happened for reasons that all of us could debate till the cows come home, and I think there have been some improvements in the international financial architecture which will minimize the likelihood of the recurrence of that.

But I believe that America keeping its markets open, even absorbing a bigger deficit, helped Asia to recover more quickly, helped Mexico to recover more quickly, and over the long run, therefore, was good for the American economy as well as being the responsible thing to do. So I'm worried about it, but given the historical facts surrounding each of the last 4 or 5 years, I don't know that we could have avoided it.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. If I could just make one observation. I think another thing we're going to have to make up our minds to do, if we want the schools to function well, is to pay the teachers enough to get good teachers. California has just passed a very impressive reform proposal that will allow very large bonuses to go to teachers that actually produce results. And I'm going to be very interested to see whether it meets with the support of the people and actually produces improved learning and outcomes.

But teachers in California actually are going to make a decent living as a result of the reforms just adopted by the legislature that the Governor supported. So I think you all have to come to terms with this. We've got the biggest student body in American history, the most diverse one, and 2 million teachers are about to retire. So for all of our reform prescriptions, if you want good people to go into these classrooms, they're going to have to be paid.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. I want to call on the gentleman over on the left, and then I'm going to have to call this session to a close, because we've got to go to breakout sessions and we have two more panels and we'll all be able to continue this conversation.

Go ahead, this is the last question.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. What I'd like to do is give our panelists here a chance to comment. I have some thoughts on it, but we're going to have a panel, the last panel of the day is going to deal with the impact of the new economy on governance. And that's a very, very important issue, so I hope you will all hang around for it. But I'll defer what I have to say till then. But would any of you like to talk about this?

Go ahead.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. Let me say before we leave, since a couple of you mentioned the global aspect of this, I just got a note that I think is very good news. The Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, announced this morning that he scheduled a vote on permanent normal trading relations with China, which would open their markets to our goods and services, for the week of May the 22d, and this is very good news.

This agreement slashes tariffs by about half on everything from automobiles to agriculture to telecommunications, and it also slashes those tariffs which protect the state-run industries in China which, in large measure, have been the instrument of single-party control there. So I think it will lead to an opening of the society and a rise in freedom and personal choice.

We're talking about the new economy. Two years ago there were 2 million Internet users in China; last year there were 9. I think this year there will be somewhere between 20 million and 25 million.

So I think that this is very, very important. And I want to thank the Speaker and the leadership of the House for doing this. And I assure you, I will do what I can to pass it. I think it's not only in our economic interest, this is a profoundly important national security interest for the United States. So we end the panel on a piece of good news.

Thank you very much. Let's go into our breakout session.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Paul Romer, professor of economics, Stanford University; James K. Galbraith, professor of public affairs and government, University of Texas-Austin; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participants.

Remarks at the Second Session of the White House Conference on the New Economy

April 5, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Well, I hope you've enjoyed the conference to date. I heard the breakout sessions were wonderful. One of the things that I have not yet been able to do, although I still have hope that quantum physics will enable one of my successors to be in five places at once, but I haven't figured out how to do it yet. I'm delighted that you're all here again.

After Mr. Greenspan speaks, we will have our two final panels, one on closing the global divide in education, health, and technology, and the second on strengthening civil society and empowering our citizens with new economic tools.

The afternoon discussions will take up where the last one left off. This morning we had a panel which acknowledged that this new economy presents phenomenal opportunities and new challenges. The next panel will explain that the stakes are even higher for developing countries and, by extension, for poor areas within our own country. Today, there are more phone lines in Manhattan than there are in all of Africa. So we can imagine what the information infrastructure could mean to that entire continent.

I want to discuss in the panel what we can actually do to help deal with a lot of these challenges, and I also hope in the second panel we will discuss not only how we, as citizens, relate to each other, our communities, and our Government but how Government itself should change in the information age.

Now, I want to introduce Chairman Greenspan by saying first that, as far as I know, he was one of the first people to speak of the new economy, the impact of information technology, and the extent to which it has rewritten the rules. Of course, he's done more than talk about it. His analysis has helped to shape the public's understanding of this powerful transformation, and his decisions have helped it to continue in our country apace.

We're grateful for his 12 years of stewardship at the Federal Reserve. We're grateful that despite the seismic shifts in the global economy, he's kept his feet firmly planted on the ground.

For 7 years now, I've had elaborate instructions from the Secretary of the Treasury and from all my staff about what I was supposed to say and not say—[*laughter*]—about the Fed's decisions and about the Chairman of the Fed. One of our major newspapers ran a story a couple of months ago referring to us as the "Odd Couple." I took it as a compliment—[*laughter*]—and I hope he wasn't too chagrined.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

[*Chairman Alan Greenspan made remarks.*]

The President. Thank you very much, Chairman Greenspan.

I'd like to now begin the panel. The topic of this discussion is "The Global Divide in Health, Education, and Technology." This is something that, also, as I have said before, exists within each country. We have attempted to address it here and are attempting to do more with our new markets initiative and our efforts to close the digital divide.

But I think it's clear to all of us that we have a special responsibility and, indeed, a real opportunity to make a better world, including for those of us who live in wealthy countries, by addressing this issue globally. The United States has supported substantial debt relief for the poorest nations. We have attempted to craft a response to climate change, which would enable sustainable economies to be developed in poorer countries with our help, and we have tried some microeconomic approaches with our aid programs.

Last year, for example, the Agency for International Development funded some 2 million microenterprise loans in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. But there is a great deal yet to be done. And we have a truly amazing panel, and I want to thank them all for being here.

I want to begin by calling on Bill Gates, the founder and chairman of Microsoft. And I want to say, I have noticed in my many trips to Silicon Valley and other repositories of the new economy, that while there are a lot of people who have amassed amazing

amounts of wealth, I see more and more younger Americans more concerned about what they can do with their wealth to benefit the society and to solve the larger problems of the world than how they can spend it. And the Gates Foundation has made some phenomenal commitments to the education of minorities in America and to dealing with a lot of our most profound global problems. And I want to thank you for that, Bill, and offer you the floor.

[*Mr. Gates made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me just say, briefly, we had a meeting here, as you know, I think, with the major pharmaceutical companies in our country not very long ago to discuss what we could do with them to give them tax incentives and other support to help to develop vaccines in areas where most of the users will be in countries that are too poor to pay market prices for the vaccines. So I do think that we—and I hope our European colleagues will follow us—should take the lead in providing financial incentives so that these vaccines can, a, be developed and then, b, delivered. I think this is profoundly important.

If you just think about malaria, TB, and AIDS, just take those three, the difference it could make if we developed the vaccines and then got them out would be quite profound. And the fact that we have so much of a commitment from you I think will make a real difference, and I thank you.

I want to call now on the President of the World Bank, Jim Wolfensohn, who from the first day he took office, has really had as a critical part of his mission bridging these divides in traditional and in new and innovative ways.

Mr. Wolfensohn.

[*Mr. Wolfensohn made brief remarks.*]

The President. To give you some idea of the dimension of the education issue, there are about 125 million primary-school-aged children in the world who are not in primary school—elementary school, 40 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. That 125 million figure is about the same number of kids, the total number of kids, in grade school in the United States and Europe.

So there is the issue of getting them in; then there is the issue of what their opportunities are when they get there. And I hope there will be more discussion about this. But it occurs to me that one of the things we always see—I was in a little school in Uganda where they're very proud of the fact that all their children are going to elementary school. These beautiful children in their beautiful starched pink uniforms were in this old school looking at a map that had the Soviet Union on it.

But if you could put a computer with a printer in every small village in every developing country, they wouldn't need textbooks anymore because, among other things, the Encyclopedia Britannica is entirely on the Internet. So we need to really be thinking about things like this in different ways.

I'd like to now call on Henry Cisneros, who did yeoman's duty in this administration's first term as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and is now the CEO of Univision, where he has more influence than he did in the President's Cabinet, I'm sure. [*Laughter*]

Henry.

[*Mr. Cisneros made brief remarks.*]

The President. I'd like to now call on Dr. Amartya Sen, who won the Nobel Prize in 1998 for his magnificent work on poverty, ethics, and economics, and who has come from Cambridge University to be with us.

Thank you, sir. We're honored to have you here.

[*Dr. Sen made brief remarks.*]

The President. Now I'd like to call on Mirai Chatterjee, who is the secretary of the Self Employed Women's Association of India. I met her recently in Mumbai, when I took a couple of hours just to have a little roundtable with some of the younger people that I believe are shaping the future of her country. And I'm very interested in her comments not only about what she is doing, but about how her efforts might be amplified by the availability of new technologies.

Thank you for coming this long way to be with us.

[*Ms. Chatterjee made brief remarks.*]

The President. Well, I have a couple of things I want to say about that, but I want to wait until our last panelist has a chance to speak. And again, I thank both of you for coming such long distances to be with us.

I'd like to now call on Bob Chase, who is the president of the National Education Association and has been a leading advocate for closing the educational divides in our country.

Bob.

[*Mr. Chase made brief remarks.*]

The President. I want to call on anyone who has a question or a comment from the floor. But first, I'd like to make four points very briefly about what our panelists have said, because I find this not only fascinating but profoundly important to our future.

First of all, with regard to the health issue, while I think the vaccine matter is terribly important, we haven't mentioned something that may be even more important: clean water. We should all be investing more in clean water.

I visited a West African village on the edge of the desert in Senegal where Dorothy Height, a great American citizen, and her United Council of Negro Women had joined with our Government in building a new well and securing a fresh source of water so that the children could be healthy, and there was a sustainable agricultural environment. And all of a sudden, all the young people started coming home from Dakar back to their village to work and live, sort of like what Mirai told you about the Indian village.

I think that if you look at the number of children who die from diarrhea every year, it is inconceivable that we can meet this health challenge without both a commitment to the vaccine issue and to clean water.

The second point, Dr. Sen talked about the importance of democracy in India and throughout the world. And then you thanked me for going to Rajasthan, and you talked about how backward it used to be. They are convinced, the people in the little village of Naila I visited, that the reason that things are happening is because of the local government law which was passed a few years ago, which guaranteed that various tribes, various castes, and a certain percentage of women would be represented in every local government.

And when I was there in this very poor little village, among other things I saw that they had a computer that operated in both Hindi and English—and they assured me they had the software to put it into other languages—that even a person with basic literacy skills could operate. And I saw a young mother come in and call up a website from the Health Department in India on what you should do in your children's first 6 months, with very great software visuals. And they had a printer, so she got to print out information that looked to me to be about as good as she could get at a doctor's office here in Chevy Chase.

And I will say again, their goal is, in the State, to have one of these in a public place in every village in the State of Rajasthan within 3 years, that has all the information from the national and State government on it. The same principle would apply if you could have one in every village for the school children, with a printer. Somebody has to pay for it; somebody has to pay for the paper. But it's still—the economies to scale are much different than they would be otherwise.

In Hyderabad, which is a wealthier place obviously, the chief ministers, their goal is within a year and a half to have in every village every State service on the Internet. For example, as poor as India is, a lot of people own cars, and you can now get your driver's license over the Internet, which as I said already a couple of times since I got back, any American Governor who did that would find all the term limits laws repealed. He'd be elected for life. [*Laughter*] This is very important.

So I think we should—I just say this to point out that the local governments work. I also saw in this small village a women's dairy cooperative. They had a simple little machine that tested the fat content of their milk. It doubled their income. They also entered all their transactions on a computer. They got computerized records every week. And they were making lots more money than had ever been made in this modest industry before because of technology and the women's self-help organization. So I do think democracy

and local government have a lot to do with it.

The third point I'd like to make is that the reason I wanted Mirai to come here is that in the 7 years I have been President, I've been privileged to represent this country, as my critics never fail—tire of saying, in more nations than any other President in history. And in every continent I visited, the self-help organizations of poor people are the most impressive groups with whom I have met. And they are overwhelmingly village women.

I'll never forget the people I visited with in Africa, this women's group that ended the genital mutilation practice in their village and how they brought the handful of men who supported them to meet with me, because Hillary had previously met with them. This is very important.

I visited with Mohammad Yunus and people from the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, and you talked about the telephone. The Grameen Bank is actually trying to finance a cell phone in every village in Bangladesh, because they see it's a moneymaker, and it connects poor people to the rest of the world. You just think about it, if you had a cell phone and, where there is electricity, if you had just one computer with a good screen, easily accessible, with good software and a printer, what a difference it could make.

The final thing I'd like to say, to echo what Henry Cisneros and what Bob Chase said is, the United States and other wealthy countries have got to start looking at this as a form of our future security. We don't spend nearly enough money on this stuff. I said I'm proud of the fact that AID, since I've been in, we've shifted our emphasis, and we financed 2 million microenterprise loans last year. We should have financed 20 million microenterprise loans or 30 million or 50 million.

People come to Mr. Wolfensohn all the time, other leaders of developing countries. They want him to finance big powerplants and big projects. What we really need to do is to take these things that work to scale. That's what Henry's talking about and what Bob's talking about. How can we take these things that work to scale?

And we've got to build, in our country particularly, a bipartisan consensus that recognizes that we'll get a lot more security out of financing more of these things than we will an extra fighter plane or an extra missile or an extra something else.

And I believe I've earned the right to say that, because I've supported increases in the defense budget every year I've been here. [*Laughter*] I supported improvements in the quality of life for the men and women in uniform. But you know, this is pocket change in the United States, to make a sea change in the rest of the world. And we have got to develop a global consensus for it.

And I think that the wealthy countries also need to consider whether we should increase the financing of the World Bank, because they're in the position—the people who work for the World Bank understand these things. They have the expertise. They should be doing it. We don't have to all do it through our national efforts.

But anyway, those are my observations. This can be done—I'll say again—the biotechnology of the 21st century and the information technology, if we can take it to scale, can close the divide. And if we don't, it will get worse. And no matter how you cut it, the wealthy countries are going to have to pony up most of the money.

And then the people that run these governments in the developing countries are going to have to understand that the opportunity returns of efforts like yours are greater, sometimes, than the opportunity returns of big projects that look bigger. The President of one African country I think is one of the best-governed countries in Africa told me that until I took him to a little village to show him the microenterprise projects, he didn't even know about it. He was too focused on how he was going to get financing for the next powerplant. Now, in his defense, ever since then he's been a great promoter of this.

But we've got to start thinking about taking things that work to scale, if we really believe that technology can help developing countries leapfrog a whole generation in what was otherwise a predictable and unavoidable pattern of economic development.

Who would like to say something? Yes? Please stand up and identify yourself and ask your question.

[*At this point, the question-and-answer portion of the session began.*]

The President. If I could just say, I think that if someone from another country were to ask me how they should structure their information dissemination based on our experience after the telecom act, I would go back to the first conversation I ever had with Vice President Gore about this, when he said, "You know, the two things we have to do is make sure that there are discounted rates so that every school, every library, and every hospital can access the information. And the second thing we have to do is to make sure that it's a pro-competition setup, so that people—no matter where they are, no matter how meager their resources are—have a chance to succeed as entrepreneurs, because they'll have an explosive impact." Those are basically the only two things we fought for in that telecom bill, and I think the results, in our country, at least, speak for themselves.

Yes sir, you had a question back there?

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. I can only tell you what for me—I have supported every initiative of which I have been aware that would increase the access of disabled Americans to the workplace, and I believe that technology in this area will become more and more user-friendly, including user-friendly to the disabled. I think there are just—there will be, by definition, a market for it. And I think it's terribly important.

I noticed—it's interesting you said this—when I was in Mumbai, I stopped at two different schools for blind students and said hello to them, and I was thinking about that at the time. But I think, on balance, we should see this as a positive thing to the disabled community, because it's far more likely to bring more disabled citizens of the world into the new economy than it is to keep them out, as long as we make sure that as user-friendly technology is developed, it's made available on the most equitable possible basis.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. I have to bring this to a close, but let me tell you what I'm going to do here. We're going to have about a 15-minute break between now and the start of the final session. And what I would like to encourage you to do, if you have more questions, is to come up and talk to our panelists during the 15 minutes.

I want to close by giving our guests who have come the furthest away a chance to answer this question. Dr. Sen and Ms. Chatterjee, if you had $2 or $3 billion to spend on this topic, closing the global divide, how would you spend it? In India.

[*Dr. Sen and Ms. Chatterjee made brief remarks.*]

The President. Last comment, for Mr. Gates. The information technology revolution has created more billionaires in America in less time than ever before. And we have just scads of people worth a couple hundred million dollars which, to people like me, is real money. [*Laughter*] And what could I do as President, or what could we do, to encourage more philanthropy like the kind the Gates Foundation has manifested? And what can we do to make sure that we leverage all this so that there is some synergy in the movement of the philanthropic world toward this?

You know, 100 years ago, when J.P. Morgan and all these people made all their fortunes, they built great monuments to our culture, the great museums, the great public—the great libraries. But now, we have all these younger people who made lots of money who really want to transform society itself—really without precedent. We've always had some foundations that were interested in doing this. But the potential we have to leverage private wealth here through philanthropy to transform society, I think, is without precedent in history. What can we do to see that there are more efforts like the one you're making?

[*Mr. Gates made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let's give them all a hand. [*Applause*] We'll take a 15-minute break.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:56 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Dorothy I. Height, chair and president emerita, United Council of Negro Women; Mohammad Yunus, founder and managing director, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh; and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh, India. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participants.

Remarks at the Third Session of the White House Conference on the New Economy

April 5, 2000

The President. All right. Please be seated, everyone; let's go. The final panel today is one of particular importance—to me at least—and that is, how can the new economy's tools empower civil society and government? And I'm going to call on Esther Dyson first, the founder and chairman of EDventure Holdings, because she has to catch a plane.

Ms. Dyson. I can stay.

The President. But you can go first, anyway—so there. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Dyson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you. I think it would be good now—I'll just go over to Kaleil Tuzman, the cofounder and CEO of govWorks.com, to talk. The floor is yours.

[*Mr. Tuzman made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you. I'd like to now call on William Julius Wilson, who is now a professor of social policy at Harvard, the JFK School. He's been very generous with his time to me and to this administration over the last 7 years, and who I think, better than anyone else I know, chronicled the disappearance of work for minority males in inner cities as the economy changed and as jobs moved to the suburbs, and the implications that had for economic and social dislocation and racial tensions in our country.

So I would—I think the title of his last book was "When Work Disappears."

[*Professor Wilson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me say, as you know, we're trying to get another substantial increase in the earned-income tax credit, including one that would help working families with more than two children. The last time we—we nearly doubled the earned-income tax credit in '93, and it took—that helped us to move over 2 million people out of poverty.

Most of the people in poverty today, by American definitions, are working people, which would surprise a lot of Americans. It wouldn't surprise anybody from any developing country, where all the people in poverty are working people unless they're disabled. But it's also true in America, and I think it's very important.

And clearly, we ought to raise the minimum wage again. It still hasn't recovered its former levels. And indeed, all we will do if we raise it to my proposal is to basically recover where it was about 20 years ago in real dollar-purchasing-power terms. I hope we can do that.

I'd like to call on Professor Robert Putnam now, who is also at Harvard, and who gave us the concept of social capital, defined as "rules, networks, and trust," and has really, I think, broadened the understanding that we have of civil society and its role in how our economy works and how we all live together. And I also have the galley copy of your latest book, so you can hawk it, too, if you like. [*Laughter*] I think you should. "Bowling Alone," it's called. Worth it for the title alone. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

[*Professor Putnam made brief remarks.*]

The President. Well, first of all, I thank you all, and I want to give you a chance to comment on what each other said. But let me just observe, every time I hear Bob Putnam speak, I think that Washington, DC, needs more social capital. And I'm not kidding. And I think, also, that there is a deep yearning for this sort of thing among young people.

We have a big increase in enrollment in the Peace Corps. We have a huge increase in AmeriCorps. We've had more people in AmeriCorps in 5 years than the Peace Corps had in 20 years. That shows you there's something to what you're saying, and I think it's very real. And I saw it in very stark ways. I'm thinking of this because we're coming up on the fifth anniversary of the Oklahoma

City tragedy, where person after person down there told me they sort of uncritically bought into the anti-government rhetoric, and all of a sudden, there were these people, and their children were in school with their children, and on and on and on, all the obvious things. But there was this instantaneous sense of cohesion. It had nothing to do with Government or the fact that they were Government employees.

And I do—the whole question of whether the Internet will be an atomizing or a unifying, cohesive force in our society is, I think, an open question.

Esther, do you want to talk about it? Bill?

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Anybody out here want to say anything, ask any questions?

[*At this point, the question-and-answer portion of the session began.*]

The President. Well, when you talked about that—I want to give you an example. When you talked about all these organizations that were created in the aftermath of the industrial revolution in America, arguably, they were filling need for social capital, for networks that didn't exist when people worked in smaller work units and had more kind of comprehensive relationships with a smaller number of people.

When you did your book and you talked about Italy, for example, and how northern Italy had massive amounts of social capital, partly around the economic units that were patterned on the medieval guilds, I got to thinking about this. I'll just give you an example of something that's going on in the Internet economy.

You know, eBay, the website where you can buy or sell on eBay and you can trade, they keep up with their customer base. I just was out there last weekend, and I always ask, every time I see somebody that has anything to do with them—they're now up to approximately 30,000 people who are making a living on eBay. That's what they do for a living. They buy and sell, swap and trade on eBay. And they know that a significant percentage of these people who are now making a living were actually very poor, were actually moved from being on public assistance, on welfare, to making a living on eBay. So they have, in effect, recreated a small village.

On the other hand, they're working alone on a computer at home. Does this phenomena add to or subtract from the stock of our social capital?

Professor Robert Putnam. Yes. [*Laughter*]

The President. You ought to run for office if that's your answer.

[*The question-and-answer session continued.*]

The President. Let me just give you one other example. I've seen this in several contexts in all of the controversies in which I've been involved here over the last 7 years. You can create a virtual national movement over the Internet in 48 hours.

Professor Putnam. Yes.

The President. Somebody supports my position on the assault weapons ban; somebody opposes my position to close the gun show loophole—I can give you 30 examples. And all of a sudden, you will have 200,000 people that are in touch with each other all for the same thing. And I think in a lot of ways that's empowering and a very, very good thing. And a lot—but the thing that bothers me about it is, even though it has infinite possibilities and it's really reinforcing, in some sense you want communities to be places of different views have to meet and mediate those views——

Professor Putnam. Yes.

The President. ——where you have to confront not only those that agree with you and you want to swell your numbers so you will have a defined political impact, but you have to sit down at the table with people who totally disagree with you and try to figure out what in the Sam Hill you're going to do to live together and work together and move forward. That concerns me as well, because it's like the specialty magazines or the 69 channels on your cable or other stuff. I think all this, on balance, is a big plus. It's more fun for me. I like it, you know, and everybody else does.

But the question is, where do we find the commons? And how can we use the technology to find the commons and to honestly discuss in a respectful way with people with

whom you disagree those matters that have to be dealt with? Because no matter what our opinion is, you know, our action or inaction will define who we are as a people.

You know, for example, I think about a developing country that—what I hope from what Ms. Chatterjee was saying is that, in the beginning of her opening remarks, is that somehow technology can be used to bring decisionmakers face to face with the poor, en masse, and force them to interact with them in a way that in effect creates a community that wouldn't be there, because we all know in every society the people who are really poor and downtrodden tend to be invisible to people until they're intruded upon.

I don't have an answer to this. I just know it's a serious problem. It's a problem—you know, when I leave the White—I don't have an option, as President, not to deal with people who disagree with me. And I think it's a good thing, because I'm constantly having to reexamine my opinions on the issues or wondering whether on the edges I might have been wrong or whether we can do better, you know?

But when I leave here, you know, I can do just fine and be happy and sassy going through the rest of my life just being around people that agree with me all the time. And I don't know that that's the best thing for a community. There needs to be a common space where we come together across the lines that divide us.

[*The question-and-answer session concluded.*]

The President. I agree with that. Let me say to all of you, one of the things in our budget this year, in addition to our efforts to connect all the schools and libraries, is funds to set up 1,000 community centers in poor rural communities, Native American reservations, and relatively isolated urban neighborhoods, so that it will, by definition, build social capital, if you have community centers where people can come and access the net with people there who are trained to help people use it who otherwise would never use it. I think it can make a big difference.

Well, we stayed an hour late, but it was certainly interesting. I think you did a great job, and I thank you all for your patience.

Thank you for being here today. It was great.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Robert Putnam, Stanfield Professor of International Peace in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the participants.

Statement on Signing the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century

April 5, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1000, the "Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century." Several of the broad, fundamental improvements in aviation safety supported by Senator Ford are contained in this legislation. It is particularly satisfying to see the Congress bestow this recognition on such an outstanding advocate of U.S. aviation.

Since the last major aviation law was enacted in 1996, both my Administration and the Congress have committed significant time and resources to bring about a new era for aviation. I remember well my trip to the Boeing plant in Washington State in 1993 to signal our concern for the renewal of an industry then facing very difficult economic times. The subsequent focus by this Administration on flexible solutions—from the Open Skies agreements we have negotiated worldwide to the "free flight" rules in the safety and air traffic area—has combined with the Nation's truly impressive economic performance to make this industry a winner.

This bill contains many new provisions to advance aviation safety. Of particular note is the inclusion of the "Aircraft Safety Act of 1999," which my Administration proposed to help stop the indefensible practice of manufacturing, distributing, and installing fraudulently represented, nonconforming aircraft parts. Several significant provisions to provide "whistleblower" protections to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and air

industry employees, to close a potential loophole in the prosecution of hazardous materials cases, and to combat "air rage" incidents in flight, will also address real safety concerns we face today.

In addition, the bill builds on the reforms proposed by my Administration and enacted in 1995, and represents an additional step toward our long-term objectives of modernization and stability of the FAA's critical air traffic services. However, we have yet to achieve fundamental structural reform of the FAA. Toward that end, I recently directed the FAA to report back to me at the end of April with options for achieving broader reforms. While I applaud the Congress for the management reforms already provided, I call upon the Congress to join me in moving forward to further system-wide reform of air traffic services.

Although this legislation seeks to provide substantial funding guarantees for airport construction and other capital investment, it jeopardizes funding for safety. I remain concerned about the possible effect of H.R. 1000's procedural requirements on appropriations for air traffic control and other crucial safety functions funded by the FAA's Operations account. The bill mandates unnecessarily large increases for FAA capital spending under the budget caps, thereby making it more difficult to fund other discretionary programs, especially transportation programs such as FAA Operations, Amtrak, and the Coast Guard. Because the bill also limits the ability of the appropriators to reallocate aviation-related capital spending to meet more pressing operational needs within the FAA, the bill creates an extra hurdle to fully funding the amounts authorized and required for FAA operations. My Administration will work with the Congress to achieve more balanced funding of aviation programs in Fiscal Year 2001.

Moreover, certain provisions of this legislation must be interpreted and applied in a manner that avoids violating the constitutional separation of powers. While I applaud the new focus that the oversight subcommittee established by H.R. 1000 will bring to bear on FAA air traffic services, neither the subcommittee's authorities nor the "for cause" removal protection for its members may be construed to grant it discretion to block significant executive branch policies and directions, particularly to the extent those policies bear on the interrelationship between civilian and military aviation and on the conduct of foreign affairs. Similarly, because the bill provides for the appointment of the Chief Operating Officer in a manner inconsistent with the requirements of the Appointments Clause of the Constitution, the Administrator will be unable to delegate to the Chief Operating Officer those responsibilities that properly may be exercised only by an "Officer" of the United States within the meaning of the Constitution. Finally, in light of my authority to make recommendations to the Congress and to control negotiations and diplomacy in the field of foreign affairs, I must reserve the authority to revise executive branch budget requests before they are submitted to the Congress and to enter into only those negotiations with foreign states and international organizations that I believe appropriate.

This new law also includes an important legislative advance for air travelers with disabilities. My Administration proposed the extension of protections in domestic travel to travel on foreign carriers, along with higher penalties for violations, and I commend the Congress for providing such protections—and for making protections of other civil rights explicit in domestic air travel. Aviation consumers will benefit in other areas as well. For example, the bill increases funding for enforcement of air traveler safeguards, such as those prohibiting deceptive advertising and those providing denied boarding protection. The bill also improves the "family assistance" provisions enacted in 1996 and 1997 to comfort those with friends or family involved in an aviation disaster.

I am also pleased that Title VIII of this legislation codifies the recommendations of the National Parks Overflights Working Group on regulating air tours over national parks. These provisions represent a consensus approach to minimizing the impact of commercial air tours on the natural and cultural resources in national parks.

As proposed by my Administration, substantial changes are included in H.R. 1000 to increase airline competition. Certainly one

of the most significant is an end to the "slots" rules that restrict access to O'Hare, LaGuardia, and John F. Kennedy International airports. The restrictions will be eased almost immediately, and then ended completely in 2002 in Chicago and in 2007 in New York City. This Act also substantially achieves a second Administration proposal to enhance competition. We proposed allowing a $2 increase in the current $3-per-segment Passenger Facility Charge, with a condition that a "dominated hub" airport provide a competition plan that lays out how new entrants and other competing carriers can be included in the airport facility plans. This bill includes the requirement for a competition plan and a $1.50 increase. Because effective competition has not worked as well on lightly traveled routes (with resulting high fares), we endorsed the Senate's rural air service pilot program that is substantially adopted in this Act.

This legislation provides benefits to passengers and the aviation community, and represents a first step toward our long-term objectives for modernization and stability of FAA's critical air traffic control services. I thank the Members of Congress who led the 3-year effort to enact this bill, and I am pleased to sign it into law.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 5, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 1000, approved April 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106–181.

Statement on Signing the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century

April 5, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1000, the "Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century." This legislation contains important measures to improve aviation safety, increase airline competition, protect air travelers with disabilities, and boost assistance for the families of victims of aviation disasters. The bill also takes an additional step toward our long-term objectives for modernizing and reforming the FAA's provision of critical air traffic control services.

I call on Congress to join me in moving forward to further system-wide reform of air traffic control. While this legislation seeks to provide substantial funding guarantees for airport construction and other capital investment, I remain concerned about the possible effect of the bill's procedural requirements on future appropriations for air traffic control and other crucial safety functions funded by the FAA's Operations account. My administration will work with the Congress to achieve more balanced funding of aviation programs in fiscal year 2001.

NOTE: H.R. 1000, approved April 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106–181.

Statement on the Conclusion of the Independent Counsel's Investigation of Alexis Herman

April 5, 2000

I am very pleased to learn that Independent Counsel Ralph Lancaster has concluded his investigation. Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman has for many years served our Nation with selfless dedication and extraordinary talent. She did not deserve what she has had to endure over the past many months. As I said at the start of this inquiry, nearly 2 years ago, Secretary Herman did nothing wrong. But throughout it all, she was never deterred from her mission: making life better for America's working families. I am proud to call her my friend, and I am honored that she has been willing to work in this administration on behalf of working people everywhere.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Hazardous Materials Transportation

April 5, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

I herewith transmit the Department of Transportation's Biennial Report on Hazardous Materials Transportation for Calendar

Years 1996-1997. The report has been prepared in accordance with the Federal hazardous materials transportation law, 49 U.S.C. 5121(e).

William J. Clinton

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

April 5, 2000

Dear _____ *:*

I transmit herewith the 6-month report required under the heading "International Organizations and Programs" in title IV of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1996 (Public Law 104–107), relating to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Mitch McConnell, chairman, and Patrick Leahy, ranking member, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdensen, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; and Sonny Callahan, chairman, and Nancy Pelosi, House Committee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs.

Interview With Dan Rather of the "CBS Evening News"

April 6, 2000

Mr. Rather. First of all, thanks for doing this.

The President. Glad to.

Elian Gonzalez

Mr. Rather. I want to talk to you about guns, gun legislation. But the day's news is on Elian Gonzalez. His father is here; the boy's father is here. How soon can he expect to see the child?

The President. Well, first, I think we should say it's a good thing that he's here. I'm glad he's here. And the Justice Department is working on that, and I think in a way we're fortunate to have an Attorney General who understands this issue, because Janet Reno was the prosecutor in Dade County for many years. And they're working on it. I don't know, I can't answer with any specifics. But I have confidence that they'll do the best they can to handle it in an expeditious and sensitive way.

Mr. Rather. "In an expeditious and sensitive way." Mr. President, from almost all other citizens, if the Immigration Service rules, and a Federal judge backs the ruling, then people will obey the law. What's happened here?

The President. Well, I think the people—you can ask them; they can speak for themselves better than I do. But they, I think they feel that they're not sure that the process was adequate since it occurred in Cuba. I think that's basically what's going on.

And you know, some of the people there are just against anybody going back to Cuba. But I think there are a lot of people who have genuine questions about it. And I think the fact that the father has come here and will be in a position to show his concern for and desire to be reunited with his son should be a big help. And as I said, I think the Justice Department will do a good job here, and I think Attorney General Reno really understands what's going on. And I think we'll work through it.

Mr. Rather. You have consistently said that the father speaks for the son. You stand by that?

The President. Well, that's the decision that was made by the INS. They went down and interviewed the father extensively. And they concluded that based on his previous contacts, which were regular, with his son, that he was a fit representative to speak for his son. And under our law, since Elian Gonzalez is a very young child, someone must be the designated person to speak for him. And under our law, the parent, as long as he is a fit parent, is that person.

So the INS made the decision that they felt was appropriate, and the judge ruled that they had the authority to make it. And now the family members in Miami are appealing to the Court of Appeals and arguing that there ought to be a more extensive inquiry into his best interests. That's the legal position.

But I think that the main thing is that the Justice Department is handling it and that in the end the law ought to prevail. And I don't think that the young man's best interests are served by the rest of us talking about it too much. I think the Justice Department is going to try to work through this, and I have confidence that Janet Reno will handle it in a good way.

Mayor Alexander Penelas of Metro-Dade County, Florida

Mr. Rather. I respect what you say about perhaps we shouldn't discuss it too much. But the mayor of Miami—I have in mind you saying, well, the law takes care of this. But the mayor of Miami has said that if anything bad happens, he will hold you and Janet Reno directly responsible, and—I think I quote him at least indirectly, correctly—don't expect any help from him or the city of Miami in enforcing the law. Did that surprise you?

The President. It did. But I think there's been some indication since then that he and others want to get this back in a lawful process. And I think the mayor of Miami is a fine young leader with an enormous amount of potential. But he represents the Cuban-American community. He's part of it. They have—I think that it's fair to say they have a big presumption against anything that happens in Cuba, including an INS proceeding.

But I think that in the end, the rule of law will prevail in this country. The overwhelming majority of Cuban-Americans are law-abiding good citizens. They've made a great contribution to our country. And I think in the end, the rule of law will prevail. And I think we ought to have—just take a deep breath here and realize this is a highly unusual case, and let the Attorney General work through it. I believe that they will. I believe she'll do a good job on this.

Vice President Al Gore

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, you've consistently said that we should not politicize the case of this 6-year-old boy. But your Vice President has broken with your administration's position, a clearly political move. One, were you surprised by that? And two, are you irritated or angry about it?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't know that it was clearly political, in the sense that there was a bill introduced in the Congress to deal with what the people in Miami say is the main defect in the INS proceeding. They say—you know, it's interesting. If you notice, they haven't attacked the father. They haven't claimed that he was an unfit father.

Their claim is entirely different. Their claim is that even if he is a fit father, that it's not in Elian Gonzalez's best interests to be returned, at least at this moment. That's their position. So they say, if the INS followed the law, then the law ought to be changed so that a determination of his best interests can be made.

Now, once the bill was introduced—there are a lot of reasons I don't agree with the bill. I don't support the bill. But once the bill was introduced, I think every public figure in America, national figure, was going to have to take a position on it.

And as a matter of fact, I don't believe it was a purely political position. I know the conventional wisdom is that the Vice President's position was purely political, but he talked to me—I don't know, a day or two after Elian Gonzalez's case became public, weeks and weeks and weeks ago, and said, "You know, I'm very worried about this process. I'm afraid we're going to have a lot of problems with this process. I'm just not sure it's adequate."

So you know, he personally and privately said that to me long before this bill was introduced and long before it became a matter of big public debate. So that's the way he personally feels. And because of that and, I think, because he is himself a candidate now, I think he had to take a position and say what he thought.

Mr. Rather. Respectfully, Mr. President, a member of the Vice President's staff has been quoted as saying that it "was a political decision." And too, he went on to say, the

Vice President isn't going to "fall on his sword" for you. That would lead a reasonable person to believe that it was a political decision.

The President. Well, I don't know. You know, if I knew who said that, and they were quoted by name, I would have more regard for the quote.

I don't think he should fall on his sword for me. He's out there now making his own case to the American people. All I can tell you is, I'll bet you that staff member didn't know that I talked to Al Gore shortly after this case became public, and he said to me privately that he was disturbed about the process and whether it could adequately account for this young man's best interests. That's what he told me a long time ago, purely privately, and long before he ever said anything publicly about it.

Mr. Rather. I want to move on to the subject of guns, but before we—just as we leave this——

The President. He might have meant, you know, that falling on your sword sometimes means that you have to agree with the President, whether you really agree with the President or not. That's what Vice Presidents do when they're not independent candidates. And since I don't think he agrees with me, and since he is a candidate. I don't think he should mask an honest disagreement. And it's one that I believe that he actually believes, based on a private conversation I had long before he ever made a public statement.

Mr. Rather. So you don't have any problem with it?

The President. No.

Gun Safety Legislation

Mr. Rather. Let's talk about guns. Next week, is it fair to say you're dedicating the week to doing what you can to get increased, at least, handgun control?

The President. Yes.

Mr. Rather. You're going to Maryland to be seen with the Governor as he signs a new handgun control law into law. Then you're going to Colorado, where there is a State ballot initiative that you're backing, and this initiative contains many of the provisions that you seek in Federal law. Question, why no focus on getting new State laws passed, rather than press forward with Federal legislation?

The President. Because it'll take forever and a day. And because if you have Federal laws, they can be more efficiently administered. I mean, if you look at—and let me back up and say, I consider these measures gun safety measures. I think gun control is still sort of an explosive term to the American people, because they think we're going to take somebody's guns away from them.

And the truth is, all we've tried to do is to take preventive measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. And I think that on the specific measures, I think the overwhelming majority of the American people support us. And Colorado, which is a predominately Republican State, I believe this initiative will pass because they've had experience with it.

And I think that it's unconscionable for Congress to hide behind the fact that there are States taking action. Maryland required child trigger locks this week, for example, and required safety training courses and things of that kind for handgun purchases. The State of Massachusetts applied its consumer protection laws to handguns, and Colorado has got this initiative to close the gun show loophole, which I think is very important. But it will take forever and a day for all the States to do that, and the Federal Government ought to do it. It's a Federal responsibility and a national problem.

You know, it's simply an extension of what we did with the Brady bill. We had all this hoopla when I signed the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban about how damaging it was to the rights of gun owners, the legitimate hunters and sports people. Not a single hunter has missed a day in the deer woods; not a single sports person has missed a sport shooting contest. Nobody has been burdened by this, and a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers have not gotten handguns as a result. Gun crime is at a 30-year low in America, not just because we've increased gun prosecutions, which we have, but because we have done more prevention. That's what this is about.

Mr. Rather. You're in a fierce fight on Capitol Hill to get Federal additional gun safety legislation passed.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Rather. And you set April 20th, the anniversary of the Columbine, Colorado, high school shootings as the goal. Is there any chance that it would get passed by that time?

The President. Probably not. We have a majority for it in both Houses, I think. But the Republican leadership in the Senate may be able to keep it from coming to a vote. They can't really keep things from coming to a vote in the House, so I think there is a majority for closing the gun show loophole, a majority for banning the importation of large scale ammunition clips.

Who could be against that? We've got an assault weapons ban in the country, and then we turn around and make a mockery of it by letting people import these big ammunition clips which they can put on the guns and convert them into assault weapons. There ought to be child trigger locks on guns. Most manufacturers do it anyway. It ought to be a national requirement.

But I think we're making progress. I think the action in these States indicates it; the initiative in Colorado, with the support of many Republican officials in Colorado; the incredibly brave action that Smith & Wesson has taken to try to improve the way it markets and distributes guns and the way those handguns are sold. I hope they'll find some resonance among other gun manufacturers. So we're making progress. but this is a brutal fight. The interest behind it, the status quo, are very strong.

Mr. Rather. Do you suppose, if I may—I don't mean to interrupt—you say the interest behind this is very strong. As Butch Cassidy said to the Sundance Kid, "Who are these guys?"

The President. Well, the NRA and other groups even to the right of them, and a lot of people in the Congress, in the Republican Party, really agree with them. A handful of Democrats do. But it's basically a party fight.

And again I say, if they had any evidence that we had undermined hunting or undermined sports shooting or even undermined legitimate self-defense, it would be one thing. They don't. The only evidence they have is we have kept handguns out of the hands of half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers. And the last place, besides person-to-person transactions, that such people can get handguns with impunity is at these gun shows. So we ought to close the gun show loophole and do a background check. It's a no-brainer.

There are some minor details of adjustment that would have to be undertaken to do these background checks, to make it work when you do these one-day shows out in rural areas. But they can easily be taken care of, and we ought to do it.

Mr. Rather. You mentioned the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate. What I and other reporters talk to them, they say, basically, "Look, the President could get a lot of what he wants. He could get the trigger locks for children on handguns. He could get the ban on importing the extra long clips—if the President would simply compromise on the criminal background checks for gun shows." Why not make that compromise?

The President. Well, first of all, we already offered a compromise. John Conyers has offered a compromise to Representative Henry Hyde that we were hoping could prevail in the conference. You know, the bill is in conference now. We got a good bill out of the Senate on this gun show loophole because the Vice President broke the tie. The bill is in conference, and Mr. Conyers offered a compromise.

Let me say, if you look at the gun shows, they want insta-check. And here's the problem. When you do these background checks—let's just look at the facts—when you do the background checks, you can get over 70 percent of the background checks done in the first hour. You can get 95 percent of them done—or over 90 percent in the first day. So they say, "Well, just agree to a 24-hour background check or an insta-check system." The real difficulty is, of the roughly 10 percent you can't finish in one day, the rejection rate in that 10 percent is 20 times higher than the rejection rate in the 90 percent. So what we tried to do was to work out an agreement where we let everybody who would be cleared, be cleared, but we didn't have an automatic release for the others because they're 20 times more likely to

have background problems, which would not enable them to purchase these guns.

So I think it is an almost bizarre development, since we're more than willing to meet them halfway. We've offered them a good compromise—that they would hold this whole bill up to protect that 10 percent when they know that's where a huge percentage of the problem gun-buyers are, people that are likely to use those guns for criminal conduct.

So we have offered a compromise. John Conyers offered a good compromise to Representative Henry Hyde, and I hope and pray that they will take it or something like it. I'm willing to compromise, but I don't think that we ought to gut the main purposes of the background check. And again, you know, they say, "Well, we have these shows out in the country. They occur on the weekend. They're not all basically at big-city convention centers."

But the gun could be deposited with the local sheriff's office for the weekend while the background check is completed, for example. You could deposit the gun and the check and return one or the other, or both. It would be easy to work through this if they really wanted to.

I just think it's important—I think the child trigger locks are important because the accidental death rate in America of the children are so high, 9 times higher than the next 25 biggest countries combined. But we ought to close the loophole in the Brady law. I am willing to compromise, but I don't want to destroy the purposes of the background check.

Mr. Rather. Our correspondent Maureen Maher has been doing some investigation of some of the loopholes in the Brady law, which turn out to be pretty extensive. If you could close one loophole in the Brady law, what would it be?

The President. Oh, the gun show loophole. That's the most important one. There are some other loopholes in the Brady law, but if you look at the numbers, it's been quite successful; for all of its problems, it's been quite successful. And when you do the insta-check, you know, we have to do instant checks whenever we can—when you do the insta-check, you actually—you lose some people, because if you can't wait 3 days, there are some records that haven't been logged in, for example, that won't be picked up on the insta-check. But when we passed the Brady bill, that's the best we could do. We had to take a bill that would say a 3-day waiting period, but insta-check whenever possible when it became possible. And so we're stuck with that for the time being.

I have a totally different view of this than the people on the other side of the issue. I think I've demonstrated in 7 years here I've never tried to take a gun away from a law-abiding citizen. I've never tried to interfere with hunting or sport shooting. But I believe that guns are like every other area of national life where there is a lot of loss of life and injury. Prevention is always the first line of defense.

Their position, basically, is: Punish people that violate the law; throw the book at them; but in this area alone, let's don't have much prevention, because we're worried about the second amendment or a slippery slope or whatever. And I just think they're wrong. I think that we can save so many more lives by sensible prevention and not interfere with legitimate gun owners.

President's History With Guns

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, did you ever own a gun?

The President. Oh, yes. I've owned a shotgun; I had a .22 when I was little kid. I had a couple of handguns when I was a Governor.

Mr. Rather. Did you hunt?

The President. Oh, yes. I suppose I was 12 the first time I had target practice, you know, shooting cans off fenceposts. And I normally went hunting, duck hunting, once a year when I was Governor. On occasion, I went bird hunting. I've been duck hunting a couple of times since I've been President.

Smith & Wesson

Mr. Rather. Let me follow up on this Smith & Wesson deal. A number of people, none of whom want their name attached to it, say, "Dan, you have to look into this deal," because, one, Smith & Wesson was about to go bankrupt, and so this was a form of what

they call financial blackmail. Anything to that argument?

The President. Not that I know of. I don't know that—if it's true, I don't know it.

Mr. Rather. I understand. Any agreement, that you know of, the Federal Government has agreed to supply Federal law enforcement officers with Smith & Wesson weapons?

The President. No, that was not a part of the agreement. Since then, we have looked into the question of whether we—as have many local jurisdictions looked into the question—whether they can give any kind of preference or consideration to Smith & Wesson in their purchases because they've taken this action. But obviously, whatever they do will have to take account of the need to get the best possible weapons for their law enforcement officials.

But that was not a quid pro quo; that was something that came up later. And we're looking into—I wanted to look into to see what, if anything, we can do as well. But I know that a lot of cities were so appreciative of what Smith & Wesson did.

See, here is the deal. This is another thing. This is like the Brady bill gun show loophole. The main thing Smith & Wesson did in changing its marketing and distribution policies was to focus on a fact that I would think that the NRA would want us to focus on, and that is that an inordinately high percentage of guns used in crimes are sold through a very small percentage of the gun sellers. So the main thing, when you strip away everything else Smith & Wesson did, what they're really trying to do is to stop providing weapons to people who obviously are careless in enforcing the Brady bill or have a criminal clientele or otherwise just aren't taking care of their business.

I would have thought when Smith & Wesson came forward, since this had nothing to do with the Brady bill or anything else, this was about having gun dealers clean up their act and gun manufacturers putting the hammer on them to do it, rewarding those that are good, punishing those that aren't. I would have thought that's the kind of thing the NRA would like.

I was actually kind of surprised that they and the gun dealers went so totally the other way about this, because you can't get out of the fact—we now have evidence—a very small percentage of gun dealers sell a very high percentage of the guns used in serious crimes. That's what we're trying to get at.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I have all kinds of things I'd like to ask you about, including China and the World Trade Organization, but the clock is running on us. Let me ask you two questions, and I'll let you get on to your next meeting.

You recently said at a meeting that the First Lady, in her bid for a Senate seat in New York, faces—I think this is your direct quote—"a right-wing venom machine that's collecting double tons of money to defeat her." Was that too strong, on reflection?

The President. Well, it depends on how you interpret the facts. Richard Viguerie is doing Mayor Giuliani's mail. Mayor Giuliani, when he was mayor of New York, basically said, "I'm not a Reagan Republican anymore. I'm a moderate Republican. I'm pro-choice. I'm for the Brady bill. I'm for the assault weapons ban. I'm for the President's crime program." We worked together. We had a good relationship.

Now he's got Richard Viguerie doing this venomous mailing, talking about what a left-wing crazy my wife is, when—while he was mayor of New York, he was in agreement with her and me on most issues.

Mr. Rather. While he was helping the mayor.

The President. No, while Rudy Giuliani was mayor. But the Viguerie mailings, which are being sent to people who have fought me the whole time I'm here—which is fine—are basically using the same old standard hard-core right-wing stuff, the kind of stuff we saw Governor Bush do to Senator McCain in South Carolina, that kind of—sort of that kind of thing.

And I think if he's going to do it and get the benefit of it, he can raise a lot of money, because a lot of us folks see beating Hillary or beating the Vice President as another way of going after us for what we've tried to do here on issues like gun safety and vetoing the big tax cuts to keep a balanced budget and the surplus and other things we've fought

for. They see that as a way of continuing the battle.

He can raise a lot of money that way, but I don't think he should be able to raise it for free. That is, I think he ought to have to be accountable for the rhetoric being used in his behalf and the money that's coming in as a result of that kind of inflammatory right-wing rhetoric.

Mr. Rather. Would you be surprised if I told you that tonight's CBS poll indicates the First Lady is up by 8 points now in the race with Giuliani?

The President. A little bit. But I think it's going to be a close race and a hard race. But she knows why she's running. She knows what she wants to do for New York. I'm really proud of her, and I just—I think these polls will change a lot between now and November. He's a very formidable opponent.

Mr. Rather. You don't think that what one newspaper has called the "wealthy hate Hillary campaign" will, in the end, sink her?

The President. No, I don't. I think the main thing that she's got to think about is not what they're saying about her but what she's going to say to the people of New York. I think a lot of that is—when you have opposition in politics, a lot of times what they're trying to do is distract you from doing your main job, which is to communicate with the people and to serve the people. And I think if she'll just focus on that, talk about her life, her work, and what she wants to do, I think she'll do fine.

Mr. Rather. Mr. President, I'm getting the cut signal. I so much appreciate you taking the time to do this. Thank you very, very much.

The President. Thanks, Dan.

Mr. Rather. Tell the First Lady hello for us.

The President. I will.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:25 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast but was embargoed by the Office of the Press Secretary until 6:30 p.m. In his remarks, the President referred to Juan Miguel Gonzalez, father of Elian Gonzalez; Richard A. Viguerie, chairman, chief executive officer, and president, Conservative HQ.com; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Corporate Leaders on the One America Initiative

April 6, 2000

Thank you. Let me begin by welcoming all of you here and thanking our previous speakers. I thank Ben Johnson for making sure I won't be alone to turn the lights out at the end of my tenure here—[*laughter*]—and for what you can see is his evident passion for his work. I don't know if I've ever heard anybody tell a centipede joke before. [*Laughter*]

I grew up in a place when I was a kid where I could collect centipedes, scorpions, brown recluse spiders, all kinds of snakes. I never thought they were very funny before. [*Laughter*] But he made it funny.

I want to thank George Fisher for his leadership on this and so many other issues. I have really loved working with him over the course of my Presidency. And I want to thank Duane Ackerman for what he said. We didn't know each other very well until I started on this whole new markets tour, which is an important part of building one America, giving everybody a chance to participate in our prosperity. And I realize that he had come, like me, from pretty modest circumstances to a very high position, and he never forgot where he came from. And he's interested in giving all people a chance to be a part of it, and I am grateful.

I was looking at these two leaders of our business community and looking at many of you out here with whom I had the privilege to work, and it made me feel very proud of my country and very confident of our future success.

I'd like to thank the members of the administration who are here: Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman; our FCC Chair, Bill Kennard; and the front row here has a whole lineup of our White House stars. I thank them for all being here and for their commitment to this work.

As Ben said, this is the third time we have brought key leaders to the White House to talk about the role of specific elements in American society for building one America.

Last year we had a distinguished group of lawyers here who answered our call to use the power of the legal profession not only to fight discrimination and empower citizens who want to do the same but to have their law firms reflect the legal causes that lawyers have been fighting for, for decades in this country, and I appreciated that.

Last month we had a coalition of religious leaders here who pledged the power of faith in our ongoing efforts. Today, we recognize that corporate America is an equally, perhaps even more powerful force in the movement for building one America. Dr. King once said, "We refuse to believe there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this Nation." Today, there is a new understanding that actually building one America replenishes the funds in the vaults of opportunity, that this is not an act of charity or kindness or even constitutional obligation but enlightened self-interest.

For the past 7 years, I have tried to unlock those vaults and let the river of opportunity flow to every community and every person. And I am grateful for the chance that we have had to be part of building the longest economic expansion in our history and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded. I'm proud of the fact that we have an administration that looks like America, with the most diverse Cabinet and staff in history.

But we all know there are still people and places left behind, and there are still places where problems exist even when people try to root them out. And I appreciated George Fisher citing his own company. I am quite sure that any of us, including me, who had any organization of any size have similar experiences somewhere in the operations which we lead.

Now, a part of what we're trying to do is just to get economic opportunity out there. That's what the whole new markets effort is about. We've been to the Mississippi Delta, to Appalachia, to the Pine Ridge Reservation, to inner cities. On April the 16th, I'm going to go out to east Palo Alto, to the Ship Rock Native American Reservation in New Mexico, and to one or two other places to try to focus specifically on what technology can do, not to open but to close the digital divide and increase economic opportunity for our people.

But it is also important to put the power of diversity to work for our economy in daily ways. And that means encouraging diversity throughout every single corporate organization in America, from the boardroom to the stockroom, forging partnerships between corporations and others who need them, schools and communities to promote educational opportunities. It means working with efforts like the Welfare to Work Partnership, the School to Work Partnership, to get more young people on the path to good careers. It means doing more business with small, minority-owned suppliers of all kinds. It means using the corporate bully pulpit to convince others that an investment in diversity is the right and the smart thing to do.

Yesterday we had a fascinating economic summit here at the White House. It highlighted how the rapid development of information technology in the last years—10 years—has dramatically transformed our economy, giving us unprecedented growth, wealth, and job creation.

We also faced the fact that a lot of people have been left behind in this development. We know that minorities and poor whites have participated at a lower rate in the new economy because they don't have the skills necessary to fill a large number of the high-tech jobs being created every day.

Even though we have a very low unemployment rate, the lowest in 30 years, it's very interesting—to highlight this—where the shortage of high-tech jobs is. The Congress, once again, is debating the need to raise the ceiling on what we call the H-1B visas. Those are visas that people get because they have special skills to come to contribute here. And we will raise it, and we should raise it, because first of all immigration is good for our country, and secondly, these companies need to continue to grow.

But it is very interesting that in the largest center of pure information technology employment, Silicon Valley, right next to it you have east Palo Alto, where I'm going, which has a 20 percent poverty rate and a high unemployment rate. Now, if you believe as I do, that intelligence is evenly distributed throughout the human race, that means some

of those people could fill some of those H-1B slots if only they had had the education and training to do it.

The second-largest concentration of high-tech information technology jobs, interestingly enough, is not in New York or on Corridor 128 in Massachusetts, it's here in the Washington, DC, area. The city of Washington, even though the unemployment rate is now—I think we've got it down below 6 percent—is still the second- or third-highest in the country compared to all the other States. And there's a huge job shortage here.

And if you believe that intelligence is evenly distributed and a lot of these people could be filling those jobs, if more people had had attitudes like those we've had here expressed and more systems in place like those that many of the corporate leaders here have put in place, and they could fill some of those H-1B jobs. Now, the trick is to do both at the same time, and that is what we're committed to doing. But I think it's worth pointing out.

According to our Office of Science and Technology Policy, African-Americans and Hispanics are less than half as likely, still today, to earn degrees in science and engineering as whites. According to a February issue of Black Enterprise magazine, only 4 of the top 50 blacks in corporate America working the high-tech industry.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimate that information technology will need 3 million more workers by the year 2008. So, this is just one example of something we need to be doing. And I might say this: This is not just these .com companies; information technology is dominating, driving, and making more efficient all kinds of traditional corporations. In that sense, they're just as important as they are to Duane Ackerman's connecting people; they also will create more Kodak moments for George in the years ahead. [*Laughter*]

I'm glad you mentioned that Kodak moment, by the way. I've often thought I should be getting some sort of stock benefit—[*laughter*]—for all the film I use here.

Let me just say, I want to make a couple of announcements today, to put some teeth into this enormously important event. First of all, 25 companies, all of them represented here today, have pledged to commit at least $1 million a year for the next 10 years to expand diversity in the high-tech work force. That's a $250 million long-term commitment by American corporations to close the technology skills gap.

A classic example of doing well by doing good will help us to create one America. The funds being pledged today include contributions to strengthen math and science education, to provide scholarships for minorities and women, to train more math and science teachers in our inner cities—a very important thing—to help young people pursue careers in science, engineering, and information technology. This is a very important proposition.

Many other things can be done. And I hope that this meeting today will just be the beginning of a whole new burst of effort by corporate America. And I want to thank George Fisher for saying that you don't want to judge your performance by just whether the numbers look good or whether you've met the minimum or whether you can't be sued in a court of law. That's not what all this is about. This is not about keeping something bad from happening. This is about making good things happen. And the more I represent you around the world, the more I realize that this effort to build one America is, in a way, the most advanced example of a struggle going on all over the world, which has gone on throughout human history.

I was in this little village in India a couple weeks ago, and I met with this women's dairy co-op, and they showed me how they had some, for them, very high technology to test the fat content of their milk and how proud they were that even in this poor village they had—everything that they did, all their transactions were conducted by computer.

And then I saw, in this little poor village, that the State government there had put a computer up in whatever language the people who would come to it spoke, so that even the poorest village people could get the information they needed that the Government had. And one woman who had just had a baby came in, pulled up the Health Department's page, and found out what she was supposed to do the first 2 months of her baby's life and then printed it right out. And

she went home with information as good as you could get if you had walked out of a doctor's office in Chevy Chase here today. That is the kind of thing we ought to be doing.

But the point I want to make is, what they told me was, all these changes started in 1993 when the Government adopted a new law that said the local governments had to reflect all the tribes and all the castes of India and that women had to be given 30 percent of the positions in local government. And they told me, these people in this poor village—you'd think, well, they'd think, "Gosh, you know, we're so poor we've got to work together." They told me that until this law passed and they all got elected, that people had never had dinner together in this tiny village across the caste lines and the tribal lines.

And now that they've been doing it, you know, they know what they were missing, and they can't imagine why they didn't do it all along. You see these things happen. You all know all the terrible stories from Bosnia to Rwanda to the continuing strife we have in the Middle East, and the struggles we're having Kosovo. But what I want you to understand is, there's something endemic in the human condition that both makes us afraid of people who are different from us and beneath that makes us long to reach out and connect with them.

And I think it's important to point out that this whole effort of building one America is not about homogenizing us. Four or 5 years from now, they will be having events like this at the White House, and—certainly within 10 years—it will be impossible to have four speakers, and they will all be middle-aged, gray-haired guys, and three of them will be white. It won't happen. It will change. In my lifetime, I think we will have a woman President and certainly an African-American or Hispanic or an Asian-American President—maybe all three.

But the point is, it won't diminish white guys. It will make life more interesting. [*Laughter*] But the struggle is to understand it that way. This is not a matter of homogenizing this country; it's a matter of celebrating, relishing our differences and somehow finding a way to affirm our common humanity. And the older I get, the more I become convinced that it may be one of the two or three most important journeys in life for all of us. Not just as an organization, just individual journeys. Figuring out how to understand and respect the differences between people and not feel that, in order for you to matter more, someone else has to matter less. In order for you to be secure, someone else has to be insecure. In order for you to win, someone else has to lose.

It is a constant theme throughout all human history, and it is something that, in positive and profoundly negative ways, is being played out all over the world today. And I am grateful that in our country, we are largely dealing with—in spite of the tragedy of the hate crimes against people because of their race or their religion or because they are gay, which we have to try to stamp out—largely, we're playing this out in positive ways today.

But I would ask you to remember as we close—just one last thing—what George said. This is not a matter of getting everybody right with the law. It's not a matter of having the right statistics. It's a matter of making the businesses of America a joy to work in, because they will be more productive, they will be more profitable. People are happy to go to work because they are proud of who they are; they respect those who are different from them; and they are making progress on this very difficult journey of life. Now I think it is a great, great endeavor in which to be involved, and I thank you so much for your support.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. in the Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to George M. C. Fisher, chairman, Eastman Kodak Co.; and F. Duane Ackerman, chief executive officer, BellSouth.

Statement on the Death of Former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba

April 6, 2000

Hillary and I are saddened by the death of former Tunisian President Habib

Bourguiba. On behalf of the American people, I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to President Bourguiba's family and to the Tunisian people.

President Bourguiba was a historic leader, a pioneer in Tunisia's struggle for independence and for social and economic progress. He also played a courageous role in efforts to advance peace in the Middle East. He leaves behind a nation that can be proud of its social achievements, particularly the steps it has taken to advance the status of women, and a nation poised to take on the critical challenges of deepening democracy and respect for human rights—and building a better future for all Tunisians.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the National Endowment for the Arts

April 6, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 959(d)), I transmit herewith the annual report of the National Endowment for the Arts for 1998.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 6, 2000.

Remarks at the Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner

April 6, 2000

[*Prior to the President's remarks, music from the movie "Titanic" was played.*]

The President. Haunting, isn't it? [*Laughter*] You know, usually, I go for "Hail To The Chief"—[*laughter*]—but this week I can't seem to get that song out of my head. [*Laughter*]

Good evening, President Nolen, Senator McCain, Members of Congress, members of the Radio and Television Correspondents Association, distinguished journalists, Mr. DiCaprio. [*Laughter*]

Now, ABC doesn't know whether Leo and I had an interview, a walk-through, or a drive-by. [*Laughter*] But I don't know if all their damage control is worth the effort. I mean, it's a little bit like rearranging the deck chairs on the set of "This Week With Sam and Cokie." [*Laughter*] Don't you newspeople ever learn? It isn't the mistake that kills you. It's the coverup. [*Laughter*]

Now, look, I want to say right now, I have nothing against ABC. I like ABC just as much as I like all the other networks. [*Laughter*] Just the other day, for example, Diane Sawyer came to the White House for an interview. Actually, she called it a visit. [*Laughter*] And everything was fine until she asked me to do some crayon pictures in the Oval Office. [*Laughter*] That was weird.

But I just want to say this to David Westin. You know, I've been in a lot of tough spots. Don't let this get you down. [*Laughter*] You may not be America's news leader, but you're "King of the World." [*Laughter*]

Wait a minute, before I go any further, I want to welcome the really funny person who is here tonight, the man who impersonates me every week on "Saturday Night Live," Mr. Darrell Hammond. And Darrell, I want you to know I used to think you were really funny but not so much anymore. I think it's Clinton fatigue. [*Laughter*]

Poor Darrell, what's he going to do when I leave office? [*Laughter*] Come to think of it, what am I going to do? [*Laughter*] I know that you've heard me say I hope to join the Senate spouses club. But I've been thinking, I don't really want to be a member of the Senate spouses club. I want to be president of the Senate spouses club. [*Laughter*]

You know what the big, hot issue on Capitol Hill is today? The majority party, otherwise known as the Republicans, are raising a ruckus about this census long form. They say these questions are too intrusive. Maybe it's just a matter of perspective. [*Laughter*] Depends on whether you're the asker or the answerer. [*Laughter*] But I'd be pretty hard-pressed to call these questions intrusive. You should look at the questionnaire those guys sent me. [*Laughter*] Maybe again, I don't think you should. [*Laughter*]

You know what question really upsets the Republicans on the census form? Question 19: "Are you better off today than you were at the last census?" [*Laughter*] I mean, even

a Presidential candidate has made this an issue. Just the other day he said he might leave his own census form blank. Hmmm—a blank census form? An adult literacy program? It's starting to add up. [*Laughter*] Sounds like a cry for help to me. [*Laughter*] Governor Bush even refused to state his date of birth, on the grounds that it happened more than 25 years ago. [*Laughter*]

But he's not the only person who's uptight about this long form. Let me just read you some of the questions that other prominent public officials refused to answer. For example, except for Senator McCain, the entire Republican caucus refused to answer this one: "Have you recently changed your policy on interracial dating?" [*Laughter*] "If so, do you know for sure your date is not a Catholic?" [*Laughter*] "Regardless, please attach parental approval slip."

Here's the second one. "What is the deal with your hair?" [*Laughter*] Trent Lott refused to answer that. [*Laughter*] Then again, so did Hillary. [*Laughter*] Wait a minute. How about this one. I thought this was important—how about this one: "Do you work and play well with others?" [*Laughter*] Mayor Giuliani had no comment. [*Laughter*] There's a first time for everything. [*Laughter*]

But look, I know the question that's on everyone's mind today, this custody battle involving the Gonzalez family and the United States and Cuba. And I know the new hot issue is about my difference of opinion with Vice President Gore. But with all respect, you newspeople have missed the real story here, and there is a real story. We have finally found the one immigrant Pat Buchanan wants to keep in America. [*Laughter*]

Look, it's no secret, Presidents and Vice Presidents have always disagreed. So it's time to set the record straight on the whole range of issues where the Vice President and I differ. For example, in June he will reveal his plan to relocate the United Nations Headquarters in Nashville—[*laughter*]—a bold, new idea. But I don't agree with it. Indeed, I'm growing more partial to New York every day.

When it comes to campaign finance, we differ. In our beverage of choice, I drink coffee; he drinks iced tea. However, if I'd known back then about the iced tea defense, I'd drunk tea, too. [*Laughter*]

In the days before the Democratic Convention, Al will publicly announce another longstanding disagreement we've had. We've kept it under wraps for over 7 years now. It involves our weekly White House lunches. He strongly believes it is rude for one person to eat off another person's plate. [*Laughter*] Me, I think it's a sign of friendship and familiarity. [*Laughter*]

On technology issues, God bless him, Al invented E-mail. Me, I just can't find them. [*Laughter*] Everybody now knows the Vice President prefers earth-tone; all you see me in is primary colors. [*Laughter*] We both share an abiding interest in Buddhism. [*Laughter*] But when I visited the Buddhists in India, it cost the taxpayers millions. When Al meets with Buddhists, he turns a tidy profit. [*Laughter*]

Now, our differences notwithstanding, I am a strong supporter of the Vice President. But beyond that, I'm not going to comment. After all, I'm not running for anything. For the first time in more than 20 years, my name is not on the ballot. This election is not about me. And hey, I'm okay with that. [*Laughter*] Suits me just fine. It's all of you in the media who keep trying to drag me into this thing. I mean, I don't see how it involves me at all. I'm the Commander in Chief. I've got a lot of responsibilities. Even if I were inclined to impose myself, which I'm not, I wouldn't have time. Except for last weekend, when I did find just a few hours to produce a few campaign ads for Al. I'd like you to take a look at them and tell me what you think.

[*At this point, a videotape was shown with the President speaking, as follows.*]

"This November, Americans face the future. The stakes are high, and the choice is clear. One candidate has worked for 8 years with Bill Clinton. He's considered by Bill Clinton to be a close, personal friend, helping make his toughest decisions, a partner in progress as Bill Clinton moves America forward. The other candidate has never worked a day with Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton hardly even knows the guy, and when Bill Clinton

first ran for President, he voted against Bill Clinton. Al Gore—he's Bill Clinton's choice. Shouldn't he be yours?"

"When Bill Clinton chose Al Gore as his running mate, the conventional wisdom called it a mistake. They said Gore was too much like Clinton. Too much like Clinton? Too visionary? Too strong? With a plan that would bring America too much prosperity, and the world too much peace? Bill Clinton stood up to the pundits and stared down the pollsters. Choosing Al Gore was one of his very best decisions. And doesn't that tell you a lot about Bill Clinton? Al Gore—too much like Clinton? Good for him; good for us."

"As America's greatest Vice President, Al Gore has been a voice for our values, a fighter for our families, more than that, a strong partner to Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton, a small-town boy from Arkansas who dared to dream big dreams. Young Bill worked hard and played by the rules. He went on to lead his country and build a bridge to the 21st century. Most important, Bill Clinton created AmeriCorps. Bill Clinton still believes in the promise of America, and he still believes in a place called Hope. Al Gore—because there's a 22d amendment."

The President. Unfortunately, all these ads would be illegal under the Vice President's campaign finance proposal—[*laughter*]—not because they're unethical, certainly not because they're untrue, because they're just dumb. [*Laughter*]

Of course, in America, each of us has the constitutional right to silly or dumb speech. I have certainly asserted my right here tonight. But I think we should take another moment to honor that essential freedom, to recognize that vital principle, by asking the members of the McLaughlin Group to stand. [*Laughter*]

Let me say to all of you, I really am okay most days about not being President next year. And it will be nice for all of you to have someone else to chew on. But I have loved coming to this dinner, and I have been privileged to come every year but one that I have been here. I have enjoyed all my interactions with you, the battles, the agreements, the disagreements, the probing, the jabbing, even the occasional bloodshed. And believe it or not, I appreciate the efforts you make to bring Washington's world to the world beyond Washington. I know it's important; I know it's difficult.

I've tried to keep you entertained, and I've tried to keep you involved. [*Laughter*] And I hope you've at least had some pretty good, substantive things to write about for the last 7-plus years. But for all you have done, and especially once a year for giving me, and indeed all of us, the chance to have a good laugh, I thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:34 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to John Nolen, president, Radio and Television Correspondents Association, actor Leonardo DiCaprio; David Westin, president, ABC News; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City; and author Patrick Buchanan.

Memorandum on Leadership of the Emergency Response Assistance Program

April 6, 2000

Memorandum for the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, Director, Office of Management and Budget, Director of Central Intelligence, Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Director, United States Secret Service

Subject: Designation of the Attorney General as the Lead Official for the Emergency Response Assistance Program Under Sections 1412 and 1415 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 (Public Law 104–201) (the "Act")

Under sections 1412(a) and 1415(a) of the Act, the Secretary of Defense is responsible

for implementing the Emergency Response Assistance Program, commonly known as the "Domestic Preparedness Program," to provide civilian personnel of Federal, State, and local agencies with training and expert advice regarding emergency responses to a use or threatened use of a weapon of mass destruction or related materials, and for testing and improving the responses of such agencies to emergencies involving chemical or biological weapons and related materials.

Under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 1412(a)(2) and 1415(d)(1) of the Act, I designate the Attorney General to replace the Secretary of Defense as the lead Federal official with responsibility for carrying out these programs.

These designations are effective October 1, 2000, and constitute designations pursuant to sections 1412(a)(2) and 1415(d)(1) of the Act.

The Attorney General is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register.*

William J. Clinton

NOTE: The memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secreatry on April 7.

Remarks on Signing the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000

April 7, 2000

Thank you. Let me say, first of all, to Flo Mallonee, I thought she did a great job. Her family must be very proud of her. And if you get tired of the job you're in, you might consider elected office. [*Laughter*]

I'd like to welcome all the former Social Security Commissioners here and say a special word of appreciation to our current Commissioner, Ken Apfel, and Deputy Commissioner Bill Halter. I'd also like to acknowledge the contributions of Jim Roosevelt, until recently, the Associate Commissioner for Retirement Policy at the Social Security Administration, something that would have made his grandfather very proud of him; and former Representative Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut, who is the current Associate Commissioner for Retirement Policy.

There are many leaders of the aging community here today; I welcome them. But most of all, I want to welcome this very large delegation from the United States Congress, and at risk of—if I forget anybody, do not be shy. But my notes say that present here today are: Chairman Bill Archer; our minority whip, David Bonior; Representative Ben Cardin from Maryland; Representative Mac Collins from Georgia, who is here with his granddaughter who is happy that her grandfather can continue to work into his later years—[*laughter*]—Representative Joe Crowley from New York; Representative Sam Johnson from Texas; Representative Sandy Levin from Michigan; Representative John Lewis from Georgia; Representative Ron Lewis from Kentucky; Representative Bob Matsui from California; Representative Jim Ramstad from Minnesota; our subcommittee chair, Representative Clay Shaw from Florida; Representative John Spratt from South Carolina; Representative Jerry Weller from Illinois. I don't think I've missed anybody. And you should give them all a big hand; they did a fabulous job. [*Applause*]

Over 7 years ago now, when I took office, the Vice President and I made a commitment to a 21st century vision of America, with opportunity and responsibility for all American citizens and a community of all American citizens. To do it we thought we would have to reward both work and family and create a Government that would borrow less and invest more. For 7 years, we've worked hard on that.

Today, the size of the Government is about what it was in 1960, 40 years ago, thanks, in large measure, to higher productivity from the Federal work force and the advent of new technologies. Thanks to strong cooperative efforts in the Congress, we have turned record deficits into surpluses, and we've enjoyed the longest economic expansion in history.

We've tried to find ways to reward work and family, doubling the earned-income tax credit for working families with modest means, passing the Family and Medical Leave Act, improving the college loan program, and providing tax credits for college

costs that were never there before, and many other initiatives. But we know, increasingly, how we deal with Social Security will be a test of our commitment to family and, increasingly, to work.

In the 65 years since President Roosevelt signed it into law, Social Security has dramatically transformed the lives of older and disabled Americans. Seniors were once the poorest people in America. Today, thanks to Social Security, they are the least likely to live in poverty. In spite of the fact that many seniors enjoy other sources of income, if there were no Social Security in America, almost half the seniors in the country would be below the poverty line.

Thanks to Social Security, many of our seniors have a level of independence that few older Americans could even have dreamed of 65 years ago. And thanks to Social Security, we Americans continue to uphold the sacred compact between the generations.

But FDR himself said, and I quote, that "Social Security represents a cornerstone in a structure which is by no means complete," and that "new conditions impose new requirements upon Government and those who conduct Government." He would have been the first to agree, I believe, that Social Security must change to keep pace with changing times in America.

The system originally was designed to encourage older Americans to retire by withholding benefits from those 65 and older who worked. Keep in mind, 65 years ago, when Social Security was initiated, the life expectancy in this country was not 65. The so-called retirement earnings test made some sense in the Great Depression, when the Nation was desperate to find jobs for young workers with families and the unemployment rate in our Nation was 25 percent.

Conditions today could hardly be more different. The economy is booming, the unemployment rate at its lowest point in 30 years. Companies desperately need more workers. Older Americans have the skills and the experience that businesses need. Indeed, one of the most interesting things that was said to me today before we started is—Flo said it's a good thing we did this, because she'd be hard to replace at her present position. [*Laughter*]

That's true. Increasingly, older Americans want to work. Many of them for various reasons need to work. And we know, as a practical matter, that unless they're in terrifically physically draining jobs, that continuing to work may well add not only to the length but to the quality of their lives.

Today, one in four Americans between 65 and 69 has at least a part-time job. Eighty percent of the baby boomers say they intend to keep working past age 65. And I'm the oldest of the baby boomers, so I can speak for our generation. One of the reasons I went to law school is so nobody could ever force me to retire. [*Laughter*] Although, I spent the better part of my life trying to escape law practice—[*laughter*]—I still remember vividly how I felt about it, even as a young man, and I still have some solace in that.

Yet, because of the Social Security retirement earnings test, the system withholds benefits from over 800,000 older working Americans and discourages countless more—no one knows how many—from actually seeking work. It has long seemed senseless to me.

In the 1992 campaign, Vice President Gore and I campaigned on scrapping the retirement earnings test. When it became obvious that the work that we had all done together to balance the budget and run a surplus and to stabilize the fund would make it possible to do so with no adverse impact, in my 1999 State of the Union Address, I proposed it.

But what has happened here is truly astonishing. I hope this will go out all across America today. All you ever hear is how much we fight up here. This bill passed unanimously. Nobody was against this. And it is a tribute to the people who work on these issues in the Congress and those who have listened to them, but also it shows that there is a keen awareness here of how the aging of America and the improved financial condition of our country and our Government has totally changed the landscape.

But I think it also reflects the understanding that this is a genuine human rights issue. We want people to have this right to choose the life they want or they need. The Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act means that hundreds of thousands of older working

Americans will get checks next month reimbursing them for all the Social Security benefits withheld this year.

Yesterday morning, in Chappaqua, New York, I went to get my morning cup of coffee in my new little village—[*laughter*]—and a lady came up to me and said, "You know, I'm a public school teacher, and my district needs me. But I'm 65 years old. Are you guys ever going to get around to lifting that earnings test?" And you know—it's terrible—I'm embarrassed to tell you this, but I can hardly keep up with my schedule from one day to the next, and I didn't remember that I was doing it the day after tomorrow. I said, "In just a few days I think you'll be very happy." [*Laughter*] So if you're looking at me today—[*laughter*]—we did it.

This bill not only means that our seniors will be able to enjoy extra income and personal fulfillment that comes with work without being penalized. It means companies with labor shortages will have a fresh supply of experienced workers, increasing our ability to grow without inflation. In the future, it will mean more baby boomers working longer, contributing more to the tax base and to the Social Security Trust Fund at precisely the time when the percentage of younger workers paying into the system will be dropping.

This is a big deal. If present work rates continue and present birth rates and present immigration rates continue, when all the baby boomers get in here, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. This may also change that and help to further stabilize the Social Security Trust Fund itself.

The retirement earnings test means higher benefits for—ending it means higher benefits for working seniors with no negative effects—I say this again—no negative effects on the long-term fiscal health of the Social Security Trust Fund. So it's the right thing to do for seniors, but it's also a smart thing for our Nation.

I'm also pleased today to announce another important innovation to upgrade Social Security for the information age. Beginning today, Americans of any age can find out in seconds what their Social Security benefit levels will be in the future. All they have to do is to log on to the Social Security Administration's website, www.ssa.gov, and click on the new Social Security retirement planner. It provides estimates of future benefits based on your past, present, and estimated future income, and a new tool for the growing legion of Americans who are learning to use new technologies to make their own investment decisions and retirement plans.

Two days ago, at the White House Conference on the New Economy, I discussed with leading experts on technology how Government could use the Internet to empower individuals and strengthen civil society. This new retirement planner is just a small but powerful example of the kind of innovations that I believe have the potential to transform the relationship between the United States Government and the American people.

Let me, finally, just add one cautionary and hopeful note. These steps today are profoundly important, but I believe we should do more to strengthen Social Security. I think we should extend the life of the Trust Fund well into the middle of this century, while strengthening benefits for older women living alone, who are still much more likely to be in poverty than other seniors.

Last fall, I proposed legislation to pay down our debt for the first time since 1835 and use the benefits of debt reduction, which would now—if we took the benefits of debt reduction that we're getting because of the surplus in Social Security tax collections now, the benefits are manifested in lower interest payments for the United States on this debt as we pay the debt down. If we took those lower interest payments, that benefit, and we put it into the Social Security Trust Fund, we could extend the life of the Trust Fund to 2054, which will be well beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers.

I hope we can work with Congress to pass that plan this year. It is a simple measure. Some of us would like to do more. We may not be able to do more in an election year, where there are genuine and honest differences between the two parties and even within the parties about how to proceed on this issue. But at least, if we could simply take the interest savings the American people have given us with their Social Security taxes,

which are now in surplus over distribution, and pay the interest savings from paying down the debt into the Trust Fund, think of it: We'd have 54 years on the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. So I hope we can do that.

I also hope we can strengthen incentives for working families to save by passing the retirement savings plan that I recommended. And I hope we can expand high-quality pension coverage for millions of workers. I have proposed tax credits for small businesses to establish good pensions for their employees. It's harder for them, and I think we ought to give them more help to do it.

Again I say, conventional wisdom says that nothing important happens in Washington in an election year. Today we have proved the conventional wisdom wrong. This is an election year. This is important, and it happened by unanimous vote of the United States House of Representatives and Senate. So, so much for the conventional wisdom, and good for the seniors in America and those of us who hope to be part of the doubling of the senior population in the next 30 years.

Let me also say, I think it's important to point out that it's not just seniors who should be happy about this, and I'm glad Flo has got her whole family here. One of the most profound worries of the baby boom generation is that, because we are so large, when we retire, if we haven't made adequate provision for it, our retirement will impose a big burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. So this should be a happy day for Americans of all ages today, because a very good thing has been done for the future.

So I thank you all for being here. I look forward to working with you to further strengthen Social Security, to strengthen Medicare. I hope we can agree to add a prescription drug benefit there. I hope we can reauthorize the Older Americans Act. I hope we can do a lot of other things this year. But the spirit—again, I want to thank the Members of Congress, the Republicans and the Democrats, for the spirit behind this action. This is how America is supposed to work. You have done a good thing today.

Thank you very much.

Now I'd like to invite the Members of Congress to come up here for the bill signing. And I'd like to invite the seniors to go over this way and kind of stand behind me, too.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Florence Mallonee, Social Security recipient, who introduced the President. H.R. 5, approved April 7, was assigned Public Law No. 106–182.

Remarks on the Legislative Agenda for International Family Planning Assistance

April 7, 2000

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House on this beautiful day. I want to thank all of you who have joined us, particularly the Members of Congress who are here. Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Jim Greenwood will speak in a moment, but I also want to acknowledge the presence of Representatives Nita Lowey, Nancy Pelosi, Ellen Tauscher, Lois Capps, Connie Morella, Joe Crowley, and Barbara Lee. Thank you for being here.

I thank Secretary Shalala for being here and for her strong advocacy. And Secretary Albright and Dr. Ifenne of Nigeria will talk in a moment. We are joined today by the Ambassadors from Albania, Colombia, and Nigeria. We welcome them.

I want to thank the foundations and the nonprofits who are here, who have stepped up their own support for women's health and family planning, and all the individual citizens who have also come here to take part in this endeavor.

This week Congress begins debate on a new budget. And we have a new chance to return America's support for family planning around the world to the level it ought to be, a new chance to lift the international family planning debate out of partisan politics and back to what it's really about, human potential and human lives. I have proposed an increase of $169 million in USAID's international family planning assistance this year and $25 million to support the U.N. population fund.

Members of the administration and I have made clear at every opportunity that we are ready to fight, and I know you are ready to help us win.

One person who is not here today, who wanted very much to be here, is Hillary, but she's out struggling to make sure I gain a place in the Senate spouses' club. [*Laughter*] But I would like to quote something she said last year at the Hague forum: "We know that no nation can hope to succeed in the global economy of the 21st century when its women and children are trapped in endless cycles of poverty, when they have inadequate health care, poor access to family planning, limited education, or when they are constrained inside social or cultural customs that impoverish their spirits and limit their dreams."

Two weeks ago I was in a little village in India, a country with nearly a billion people and a per capita income of about $450 a year. I met the women who, with the smallest amount of encouragement, have started the women's dairy cooperative and taken over the local milk business. I saw their community center's computer that any village woman, poor or nearly illiterate, can use to get the latest information on caring for a newborn child.

Think about how life in that one village is changing for the better because women have access to education and health care. Hillary and I have seen again and again around the world, in the smallest, poorest rural villages on every continent, how empowering women lifts the lives of individuals and transforms the future of communities.

Family planning is a vital part of that empowerment. It allows women and families to make their own choices and plan their own futures. If you believe God created women equal, if you believe every society needs women's contributions to succeed, then you must be in favor of returning decisions on family life to the hands of women and their families.

Around the world, the complications of pregnancy kill about 600,000 women every year. We all agree on fighting child and maternal mortality, just as we're working to eradicate polio and TB. But maternal mortality has been stuck at the same level for more than a decade now, even though we know family planning could help women bear healthier children and save the lives of 150,000 women a year. If you're in favor of healthy mothers raising healthy babies, you ought to be in favor of family planning.

Around the world, 34 million people are now living with AIDS, and in the developing world, almost half of them are women. Last year, AIDS killed 1.1 million women, leaving broken communities, crippled economies, and millions of orphaned children. If you care about stopping the spread of AIDS, you ought to care about empowering women to make safe choices for themselves and for their children.

Around the world, more than a billion young people are entering their reproductive years, the largest generation in history, and the one behind it is 2 billion strong. More than 150 million women worldwide would like to limit or space their children, but they have no access to contraception. The option these young people have and the choices they make will have vital consequences for every one of us and will, in large measure, shape the world of the 21st century. So if you're concerned about the health of our planet and about the health of everyone on it, you ought to support our family planning assistance around the world.

America has a profound interest in safe, voluntary family planning, a moral interest in saving human lives, a practical interest in building a world of healthy children and strong societies. And because we are a nation that believes in individual freedom and responsibility, we have every interest in supporting others around the world who seek the same rights and responsibilities we ourselves enjoy.

That is why we have consistently supported family planning since 1993. We do not fund abortion. We fund family planning we know reduces the demand for abortion. And I have asked Congress to return our support for international family planning to the level it reached in 1995, a level that serves our interests, keeps our promises, and leverages support from other donors around the world.

I urge Congress to give us that money without restrictions that hamper the work of family planning organizations and bar them

from discussing or debating reproductive health choices. Those congressionally sponsored restrictions impose a destructive double standard. When would we ever accept rules telling Americans at home not even to discuss women's health and women's choices? And how in the name of democracy and freedom can we impose those rules on others, which would be illegal here in the United States? That is not the American way.

We know Americans favor family planning at home and voluntary family planning assistance abroad. We should not cloud what is at stake here. Does the United States want to save lives, promote mother's and child's health, and strengthen families and communities around the world? Together, we must make sure the answer is a resounding, unequivocal yes.

Now I would like to turn to someone who has been a leader for us in the administration and around the world in making this case for women's health and women's empowerment, herself a trailblazer and a role model, who has distinguished herself, I believe extraordinarily, as our Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright.

[*At this point, Secretary Albright, Dr. Ifenne, and Representatives Maloney and Greenwood made brief remarks.*]

The President. Well, I want to thank all of the speakers. Secretary Albright, thank you. And I thank Representative Carolyn Maloney, purist though she is. [*Laughter*] We need a few. [*Laughter*]

And I thank Representative Greenwood; so many other Members who are here: Representative Pelosi, who had to leave, Representative Lowey have been leaders in this fight. And I thank, particularly, the Republicans who have joined in this fight. Representative Connie Morella here. I was just looking at Connie thinking, she's probably got more kids and grandkids than anybody else in this audience—[*laughter*]—and therefore, probably has more standing on this issue than anyone else. And we thank her and all the Members of the House who are here. I thank them.

But mostly, I want to thank you, Dr. Ifenne, for being here. I think you could see what a responsive chord you struck. But when you were speaking and then when Congressman Greenwood got up to speak and he talked about visiting a village in Bolivia, you know, the fundamental problem here, I believe, is that too many people are voting on this issue based on either pressures they receive or personal values they hold dear, genuinely. But they've never actually seen this.

If I hadn't been President, I don't suppose I ever would have gone to those small villages in Latin America and Africa and India and East Asia and met with all those village women who are, I think, the most impressive citizens in the entire world today, changing the whole future.

When Dr. Ifenne was talking, I remembered, when I was in Senegal, I visited with a group of village women who came to see me from their little village. They wanted to come to the capital to see me, because Hillary had gone out to see them, and it was a village where genital mutilation was practiced. And these women organized the village and got rid of it. And so they got up, dressed in their beautiful native dress, and they came to see me, and they even brought along a handful of men who supported them. [*Laughter*]

When you see these things, when you see people in the most basic ways taking control of their lives, and you realize it is pro-child, pro-family, pro-every value that any of us ever proposed to espouse, I believe that the United States is—in my budget, I think it's the least we should be doing. And frankly, I only proposed that much because I thought it was the most I could get passed.

But if you were to ask me what I have learned as President about our dealings with other countries, I would say two things. One is, large countries too often forget the little people in other countries. You can't afford it here, because they can vote you out. But we know that the citizens are the strength of this country; the same is true everywhere. The other thing I have learned is that we get far more—that foreign policy is a lot more like real life than most people imagine. You get a lot more, on the whole, out of cooperation than coercion.

So, Doctor, we thank you for coming. It's a long way from Nigeria. I hope your trip

will prove to be worthwhile. If every Member of the United States Congress could hear you, I'm quite confident we would prevail. For the rest of us, we have to do our best to add to your voices.

But I hope as you argue this you will remember to talk to those who have never been to those villages about what we know is true. The empowerment of individuals in difficult circumstances is the ultimate answer to all of our challenges, and this is a very important part of that.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Enyantu Ifenne, Director, Center for Development and Population Activities of Nigeria; Albanian Ambassador to the U.S. Petrit Bushati; Colombian Ambassador to the U.S. Luiz Alberto Moreno; and Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S. Jibril Muhammed Aminu.

Radio Remarks on the Social Security Internet Retirement Planner

April 7, 2000

For more than 60 years now, Social Security has provided a measure of financial security for seniors after a lifetime of work. Beginning today, Americans of all ages can log on to the Internet and find out in seconds the amount of Social Security benefits they can expect in retirement. The new on-line retirement planner estimates future benefits based on past, present, and projected future income. Just log on to the Social Security web site at www.ssa.gov, and click on the new Social Security retirement planner. It's never too early to plan you financial future.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 3:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Proclamation 7287—National Volunteer Week, 2000

April 7, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year our Nation is blessed by the service of more than 100 million Americans who take time out of their busy lives to reach out to those in need. Volunteers come from every age group and walk of life, yet they share a common conviction: that by giving of themselves, they can bridge the divide between strangers, create stronger families, and build better communities.

National Volunteer Week offers us a chance to thank the many volunteers whose work and compassion add so much to the quality of our lives. It also gives those who have never volunteered the opportunity to learn more about the many organizations that would benefit from their time and talents. People who enjoy sports can volunteer at a Special Olympics event; those who love the arts can work as docents in a gallery or historic home; those who love to read can share that love through a literacy program.

Our success with the AmeriCorps program demonstrates the power and promise of community service in America. Since we passed the National and Community Service Trust Act in 1993, more than 150,000 young people have served in AmeriCorps. They have taught or mentored more than 4 million children; helped to immunize more than a million people; worked to build some 11,000 homes; and sparked a new spirit of community service across our Nation. In my proposed budget for fiscal 2001, I have included funding to reach our goal of 100,000 AmeriCorps members in service each year. I have also outlined a new AmeriCorps Reserves program that will allow us to call upon AmeriCorps alumni during times of special need, such as following natural disasters. The Corporation for National Service will commit $10 million to create a new "E-corps"—750 qualified AmeriCorps volunteers who will

help to bring digital opportunity to communities by providing technical support to school computer systems, tutoring at Community Technology Centers, and offering technical training for careers in the information technology sector. Through a new Community Coaches program, we will place adults in 1,000 schools to help engage students in service programs that will connect them to the wider community. And through new Youth Empowerment Grants, we will reward social entrepreneurship among young people who are seeking solutions to problems such as youth violence and alienation.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us that "everyone can be great because anyone can serve." During National Volunteer Week, let us pause to thank all who have responded to that call to greatness, and let each of us make our own commitments to volunteer in our neighborhoods and communities.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9 through April 15, 2000, as National Volunteer Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to express appreciation to the volunteers among us for their commitment to service and to encourage the spirit of volunteerism in our families and communities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of April, 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, 11:16 a.m., April 10, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 16.

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.

April 2

In the morning, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV.

In the evening, the President traveled to San Jose, CA. Later he traveled to Palo Alto, CA and returned to San Jose, CA.

April 3

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

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara Snelling to be a member of the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The President announced his intention to appoint Susan Brophy McGowan as a member of the Advisory Committee on Trade Policy Negotiations.

April 4

In the afternoon, the President met with President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen in the Oval Office.

April 5

In the evening, the President traveled to Chappaqua, NY.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol W. Kinsley and Robert Rogers to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

April 6

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

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael G. Kozak to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael V. Dunn to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board.

April 7

The White House announced that the President will travel to Oklahoma City, OK, on April 19.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on March 28–29.

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 April 4

Carol W. Kinsley,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term of one year (new position).

Jane Lubchenco,
of Oregon, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation for a term expiring May 10, 2006 (reappointment).

Robert B. Rogers,
of Missouri, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2001, vice Marlee Matlin, term expired.

Barbara W. Snelling,
of Vermont, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2001, vice Dennis L. Bark, term expired.

Warren M. Washington,
of Colorado, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation, for a term expiring May 10, 2006 (reappointment).

Submitted April 5

Jay A. Garcia-Gregory,
of Puerto Rico, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, vice Raymond L. Acosta, retired.

Submitted April 6

Kent J. Dawson,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, vice a new position created by Public Law 106–113, approved November 29, 1999.

Michael V. Dunn,
of Iowa, to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration for the remainder of the term expiring October 13, 2000, vice Marsha P. Martin.

Michael V. Dunn,
of Iowa, to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration for a term expiring October 13, 2006 (reappointment).

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 April 3

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

Released April 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Statement by Press Secretary on the upcoming visit of President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen

Announcement: Participants: The White House Conference on the New Economy

Released April 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico

Released April 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released April 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Oklahoma City for a memorial dedication ceremony

Acts Approved by the President

Approved April 5

H.R. 1000 / Public Law 106–181
Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century

Approved April 7

H.R. 5 / Public Law 106–182
Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000