

If you ask the right questions, they get you the answer where you start. The same thing for Congress. If somebody asks you why you came here today, you say, "Because I like my Congressman; he's a good man. He's attentive to his duties. He's got the right ideas. He'll change in the right way. And I do not want to see America or our State or this congressional district blow the best chance we have ever had to build the future of our dreams for our children."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom A at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Marcel Groen, chairman, Montgomery County, PA, Democratic Committee; and former Representative Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on Assistance To Support Efforts To Stabilize the Situation in Sierra Leone

May 19, 2000

I have authorized the Department of Defense to provide up to \$20 million in defense goods and services to support efforts by the United Nations and other international forces to stabilize the situation in Sierra Leone. This assistance, which we will provide on a nonreimbursable basis, will include military transport, supplies, equipment, and services, so the international community has the capabilities it urgently needs.

Our African and other partners have taken a stand to restore peace and hope to Sierra Leone; we will stand with them. Sierra Leone's people have suffered far too much for far too long, and they need immediate assistance to prevent a return to full-scale civil war. We have a genuine opportunity to make a difference, to give them a chance for a better future, and to aid the cause of stability and democracy in Africa. We will do what is necessary for Sierra Leone so the international community can get the job done.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Chicago, Illinois

May 19, 2000

Thank you very much. Senator Durbin, thank you for those wonderful remarks and for your friendship. I want to begin by joining everyone else in thanking Fred and Ken for opening their beautiful home. I don't know what to make of Torricelli's remark about the concrete. *[Laughter]* Since I'm the only guy here that's not running for anything, I'm probably the only person to get away with cracking a joke about it, but I'm going to let it go, anyway. *[Laughter]*

I will say this, Senator Torricelli, in your shameless pander to Mayor Daley—*[laughter]*—referring to Chicago as the greatest city in America, I took the precaution of sending a note to the people who tape all my remarks to make sure we delete that so it can't be played in Newark the next time you run for election. *[Laughter]* And I might say, I got the mayor to approve of that before I did it. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to all of you, I am so proud to be here with these members of our Senate caucus and with our candidate. I want to thank all the host committee, not just Fred and Ken, but Joe and Yvonne, Lou and Bette. And I thank you, Joe Cari, for the work you do for our party every day. I could talk all night long just about the people who have been introduced tonight.

Tom Daschle is an extraordinary leader and one of the best people I think I've ever known. I'll never forget going to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota with him. The night before we went to visit Mount Rushmore, and I told him, I said, "Tom, you win six Senate seats and we'll put your face up there, too." *[Laughter]*

Senator Torricelli has really been—you can tell just from the way he spoke up here tonight that he's so laid back and passive, it's amazing—*[laughter]*. I can't thank him enough for pushing all this.

I thank my good friend Carl Levin, who's here from Michigan, one of the States where I think we'll win a Senate seat, and he'll have a genuine partner after this election. And Senator Bayh, who, like me, was a Governor,

and we served together many years. I was once the youngest Governor in America; then he got elected. [Laughter] I've spent the last 10 years overcoming my resentment—[laughter]—and I've about got it done.

And my friend Tom Harkin. You know, it's funny to think, sometimes when people are in elections together, as we were in 1992, you never know how it comes out. And I really—all my life I will think one of the best things about my campaign in 1992 was that I had the honor of running with Tom Harkin. He is a magnificent human being, and I love him like a brother. And he has been kind and generous and steadfast to me from the moment that election was over, and I will never forget it. And I thank you, sir.

I want to thank Speaker Madigan for helping all these people—what most State Governments think of the interior branch of our national system of Government. And I, too, want to thank Mayor Daley for his friendship and support, for letting me borrow his brother to be Commerce Secretary. [Laughter]

And I want to thank Tom Carper for running for the Senate. Tom Carper and I have been friends for many years. When I was a Governor and he was in the House, we worked on the first round of serious welfare reform, years and years ago—12 years ago now. And I can tell you—Senator Bayh, who also served with him, would echo this—there is not a more respected Governor in the United States than Tom Carper. He has a fabulous record in education and a terrific record in all things related to family policy.

One of the things I sought to do in '92 was to prove that the Democratic Party was both pro-work and pro-family. And when I talk about what we've tried to achieve around the country, Governor Carper is exhibit A. And he's generally thought to be the most likely democratic pickup in the entire United States, not because he has a weak opponent—his opponent is the distinguished chairman of the Senate Finance Committee—but because he is such a good man and such a great leader. And I thank you for running. We need you, and I'm going to be glad when you get there.

I was making a list here to give you some feel for this. If we pick up six House seats,

we win the House. And because there are more House Members, it's generally considered easier to do than to pick up six Senate seats. But I think it's quite likely. There are eight or nine States in which we have a legitimate chance of winning a Senate seat. I believe there are probably only two States in which the Republicans—given what I think will be a highly competitive election for President—will have a chance to win. And if I were a betting person, I would bet that they would not pick up more than one. So this is a realistic possibility.

You heard them talking about the stakes, and they couldn't be clearer, whether it comes to confirming judges or ratifying foreign policy decisions. I'll just give you one example. Normally, in national elections, foreign policy doesn't play such a big role if both candidates for President, for example, cross some threshold of acceptability.

But there is—I'm grateful, for example, that both the Vice President and Governor Bush supported my position on China and supported the position of the Senate Democrats on continuing our mission in Kosovo.

But there is an issue in which the majority of Senate Republicans and the Presidential nominee apparently are in agreement that, I think, has such enormous consequences for the American people that I hope it will be hotly debated and thoroughly debated in this election. And that is whether we should continue our historic commitment to reducing the nuclear threat. When the Senate voted to reject the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, it sent a shock wave through the world. No one could believe that America, which had consistently led the way, through Republican and Democrat administrations alike, was walking away from a test ban treaty which I was the first head of state in the world to sign. And the conventional quick analysis was, well, this is all just politics, you know, it's election year—or it was almost election year. They just wanted to kind of pop Bill Clinton.

If you talk to these Senators here, they will tell you a different story. They do not believe in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And apparently, that is going to be the position of their nominee and their platform. And I can just tell you that this is a big deal. I have

spent a lot of time in the last 7½ years trying to get an indefinite extension of the treaty which commits countries that sign it not to proliferate nuclear weapons or materials which can be used to make nuclear weapons; trying to get the Chemical Weapons Convention ratified; trying to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

I believe that in the years ahead, the threat of a nuclear war which hung over us in the cold war between Russia and the United States will probably continue to abate, unless something really dumb is done. But there will be more challenges from other countries who think, well, we need nuclear weapons to prove we are somebody, or because there is somebody we feel threatened by and they're trying to develop it.

And I have worked with this enough now to know that unless you have very, very sophisticated systems, the chance of an accidental launch is not insignificant, and the chance that conflicts between countries will spin out of control is always there. One of the reasons I went to India and Pakistan was to try to do whatever I could to minimize the chances that they would allow their conflict to escalate to the point when somebody, on impulse or fear, might launch a nuclear weapon. So this is a huge issue.

And I guess one of the things—people always ask me, “What have you learned as President?” One of the things I've learned out of many is that the Senate matters even more than I thought it did when I showed up in Washington. It really matters, every single vote. And one of the things that I hope will happen this year—if you'll forgive me, I won't give you a whoop-de-do speech tonight, because I know I'm preaching to the saved, as we say at home. [Laughter] But one of the things that I hope will happen this year is that we will actually have an honest debate on the future of America and that we'll ask the right question. And I think the right question is, what are we going to do with this magic moment of prosperity and improvement in our social condition and, at least in this moment, the absence of a searing domestic crisis or external threat?

And I believe the character of a nation and the wisdom and judgment of a nation can be tested just as much at a time like this

as in adversity. You know, if we all had our backs against the wall, we'd know what to do. Now we have to decide. And we have the option not to decide and just drift. It would be a terrible mistake. So I hope you will think about that.

And I would just like to just very briefly say a couple of things about it. When I was running for President in 1992, and beginning in '91, I knew I had to make a good showing in Illinois because Illinois and Michigan were the first big elections after Super Tuesday. Back then, Super Tuesday was a southern deal, and I figured I'd do pretty well. And it was, like, not a fair fight, and so I did pretty well, because I was the only guy from my part of the country running. And I'd been hanging around down there a long time. [Laughter]

So I came to Illinois, and I came to Chicago, which is my wife's hometown. And I sought out a lot of friends I had here—mostly in the African-American community—who were born in Arkansas—there were more here than anybody knew. I might have gotten the nomination uncontested if anybody knew how many African-Americans in Illinois were born in Arkansas. And a lot of you helped me. So I feel a special gratitude to you.

And I remember when President* Bush referred to me as the Governor of a small southern State. You know, I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] And I still do.

But to be fair, we knew what the deal was then. The country was in trouble. The economy was down; the deficit was exploding; we quadrupled the debt in 12 years. As the Vice President used to say on the campaign trail, “Everything that should be down was up; everything that should be up was down.” And the people took a chance on me because they knew we had to do something, and I seemed like I had thought about it. And I had.

Now, the test this year is more difficult, because we have to decide what to do with our prosperity. And there's not a person in this room tonight over 30 years of age that hasn't made at least one mistake in your life—not because things were going so badly but because things were going well in your

* White House correction.

life, and you didn't think you had to concentrate. There is not a person here that can't recall at least some personal or business error you made at some point in your life, large or small, because you thought there were no consequences to the moment.

Now, I'm not running for anything, but I can tell you something. There is a big consequence to this moment. Because we have not had a chance like this to build a future of our dreams for our kids in a long time. And I'd like to see this election run on the premise that we're not going to try to tear everybody down, that both the candidates for President are honorable and mean what they say. But they have to mean everything they say. You've got to take what you said in the primary and what you said in the—[*laughter*—]but they mean what they say.

And if you look at it, it's pretty clear what the choices are. There is a huge difference in economic policy, which the Senate will have to vote on. We favor—starting with our nominee, the Vice President, all the way down the line—an economic program that has a tax cut for the American people targeted to what we need, but one that we can afford and still pay the debt down and have enough money to invest in children and education and science and technology and the things we need to be doing as a country.

And I think that's important, because paying the debt down is one reason that interest rates and inflation haven't exploded as we have the longest economic expansion in history. And I think it's progressive social policy to keep getting this country out of debt because it keeps interest rates lower and spreads economic benefits.

They favor a tax cut that will exceed a trillion dollars over 10 years. And if you put that with their Social Security proposal, which would cost another \$800 billion, and their defense proposals, which are about, I don't know, probably \$200 billion more than ours, it means the country will go back into debt. And you have to assume—again, we don't have to criticize people; just assume everybody is honorable and they intend to do what they say.

So you have to decide whether you would like to go back to a version of the economic policy that existed before I took office, or

whether you would like to continue to change, but to build on what has produced the prosperity the last 8 years. This is a huge decision. And no amount of papering it over and talking about it can obscure the fact that every time an American votes for Congress, for Senate, or for President, that is one of the decisions that that voter is making. And you need to talk about that.

We're making decisions about what to do with the aging of America and basically, how to deal with Medicare and Social Security when all the baby boomers retire and there are only two people working for every one person drawing funds out of those programs. We believe that we can make Medicare more competitive, but we're not willing to bankrupt the hospitals and the other providers, and we think there ought to be a prescription drug benefit for seniors and that every senior that needs it ought to be able to buy it. That's what we believe.

They believe that we should cut the benefit off at 150 percent of poverty. Now, the problem with doing that is that half the seniors that need it make more money than that. And if you're living on \$15,000 a year—which is more than 150 percent of poverty—and you get \$300, \$400, \$500 drug bills a month to stay alive, pretty soon you've got to decide whether you want to eat or have your drugs. So there's a difference there.

On Social Security, it would take me all night long to go through the differences; but let me tell you, I've spent years studying this. There is a problem there. The system—if we don't do anything, the system will run out of money in about 37 years. And it will start costing us more before that, in terms of foregone opportunities. And that's in spite of the fact that ever since 1983, we've been collecting more in Social Security than we're paying out.

Now, they believe the system could be partially privatized because the markets outperform Government bonds and give everybody back 2 percent of their payroll to invest if they're under a certain age, guarantee everybody else the benefits in the conventional system. Sounds reasonable. They say, "Well, we want to get higher rates of return, and we want to let ordinary people, including poor people paying Social Security, have a

chance to create wealth.” I think that’s important. Those objectives are worthy.

Here’s the problem. If you do that, the system is going to run out of money in 2037 anyway; if you start taking out more money right now, you have to put in \$800 million, at least, over the next 10 years, to keep it from going broke just to pay the people you promised to pay. And if you put that with a \$1.3 trillion tax cut, you’re broke again; the Government is broke again; we’re back in trouble again.

What we believe is—at least I think most of these Senators do, and I know what the Vice President believes is—since the Social Security surplus that’s been coming in since ’83, that you’ve paid in your taxes, is responsible for a lot of our decline in the debt, we ought to take that portion of our declining interest rate requirements caused by your Social Security taxes and put the savings into the Trust Fund. That will take it out to 2057, beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

Then I believe that there are ways, without having the Government interfere with the market, to get the benefits of the markets for the Trust Fund. And what we favor—it’s much cheaper than their costs—is letting the Government or having the Government help lower income people have an additional IRA, or I call it a USA savings account, to invest however they want, to get into the market, but if they lose the money, they’ll still have the Social Security.

Now, you have to decide. The American people have to decide. This is a worthy debate, and it ought to be held. If you look at education, everybody says they’re for education now. We think we ought to be modernizing school facilities all over America like Mayor Daley is here in Chicago. We think we ought to have a no social promotion policy and that every kid who needs to get pre-school should get it, and every child who needs to be in an after-school program should have it. And we ought to have a strategy for turning around or shutting down failing schools, and that’s what we ought to fund.

They say they’re for all that, but we shouldn’t really require anybody to do it when we give them Federal money. That’s like me trying to be America’s principal. You have to decide whether you think we’re right

or they’re right. All I know is—I’ll tell you this one little story.

In 1996 I got a law through Congress saying that every State had to identify its failing schools and develop a strategy for turning them around. Kentucky adopted the most aggressive program to do it. I went to one of those schools in Owensboro, Kentucky, 2 weeks ago. Two-thirds of the kids were on free or reduced lunches. Here is what has happened since ’96—and, I might say, they also got some of the teachers the Democrats fought for to make smaller classes.

In ’96 there were 12 percent of the kids reading at or above grade level; today, 57 percent are. There were 5 percent of the kids doing math at or above grade level; today, 70 percent are. There were zero percent of the kids doing science at or above grade level; today, 64 percent are. That grade school ranked 18th in the entire State of Kentucky with two-thirds of the kids on free or reduced lunches, and it was an absolute failure 4 years ago. Ten of the 20 schools in the State of Kentucky that are highest rated have half or more of their kids eligible for free or reduced lunches. Race, income, and region are not destiny if you have high standards in education. That’s what we believe. Our position works. So you have to decide which one you agree with.

I think we ought to have HMO reform on Patients’ Bill of Rights. I saw what the Illinois Supreme Court did the other day. I don’t think we ought to have to wait for that. I think that people ought to have a right to see a specialist if they need it. They ought to have a right to go to the nearest emergency room. And I’ve been a supporter of managed care, and I remain a supporter of managed care. But I think we ought to pass a Patients’ Bill of Rights, and they don’t.

I think we ought to raise the minimum wage, and they don’t—and so does our crowd here. And I think we ought to do more things to spread the benefits of this economic revolution of ours to people in places that have been left behind. And we may or may not get a bipartisan agreement on that. But these are big issues.

I could go through a lot more. I’ll just mention one or two more. I think that—if you ask me what one thing I wanted for

America is, if I tonight got a vision from the good Lord, and I got a message that I had to leave the Earth tomorrow morning, and that I could not finish my term, but I could have one wish—not like a genie with three, just one—I would wish for everything to be done in this country that would heal all the divides of race, of religion, sexual orientation. That's why we're for hate crimes legislation, why we're for employment and non-discrimination legislation. And they're against it. And I think that's really important.

You know, this is a smart country. Look at all you folks. Most of you do well, unless somebody puts you in jail or locks you in a closet. [Laughter] This is a great country. And if we can figure out a way to celebrate our diversity and reaffirm our common humanity as even more important, we're going to do fine. So this is a big difference; these are just a few things.

On the environment, they think I did the wrong thing to set aside 43 million acres, roadless acres, in the National Forest. The Audubon Society says it's maybe the most important conservation move in 50 years. I think if they have the White House and the Congress, they'll reverse it next year, early next year. One of you mentioned it to me when you were going through the line tonight. You ask every Senator here—don't take my word for this—we have fought for cleaner air, cleaner water, more land set aside; we have proved you can grow the economy and improve the environment. And if they have the Government, they will reverse a lot of our environmental gains. And I think this is important to point out.

So if people ask you tomorrow why you showed up here tonight—and most of you have never met Tom Carper before—tell them you understand this: This is an election about what we're going to do with this great and good moment, and you're determined to build a future of your dreams for your child and for everybody's children.

The last thing I'd like to say is, I think it's very important that we win the White House, and I think we will. But I think you, who have come here, there are some things that even you need to be reminded of about Vice President Gore. First of all, I am something of an amateur historian of the Presi-

dency. And I've spent a lot of time since I've been President reading books not only about all the Presidents that we all are interested in but some you probably don't know much about, to try to get a full, rich picture of the history of America.

And I'm interested in the institution of the Vice Presidency. In the 19th century nobody paid any attention to it, in spite of the fact that one of our Presidents, William Henry Harrison, died a month after he took office; Abraham Lincoln was assassinated; Benjamin Harrison was shot and died after 9 months of poor medical care. And still nobody paid any attention. If you were to come visit me in the Residence of the White House and I took you to my office, you'd see that I work on Ulysses Grant's Cabinet table. And there are eight drawers in this table—one for the President, one for the seven Cabinet members; no drawer for the Vice President. Nobody paid any attention to it.

William McKinley got assassinated; he was shot. And we were just lucky that Theodore Roosevelt was a great President. Warren Harding had a stroke. Calvin Coolidge worked out okay. [Laughter] Not great, but okay. [Laughter] But it didn't have anything to do with somebody thinking about whether he should be President. And Franklin Roosevelt, whom I think along with Lincoln were our two greatest Presidents, I admire him more than anything. But we're just lucky Harry Truman was a very great President. He did not know about the atomic bomb when he became President.

Now, what's all this got to do with this? President Eisenhower and President Kennedy took it more seriously and gave more to Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson to do, and they had more responsibility than their predecessors. Then when Jimmy Carter appointed Walter Mondale, he notched it up big time. And Vice President Mondale had lunch with the President every week, had defined responsibilities, could come to any meeting. And Ronald Reagan, to give credit where credit is due, did the same thing for George Bush and made him an important figure.

So if you look at history, you've got—everybody else, here's Johnson and Nixon, here's Mondale and Bush, and then here's

Al Gore. He's probably the only person in the history of America who has had a clearly discernible impact on the welfare of the country as Vice President. He not only cast the decisive vote on a number of occasions—from breaking the tie on the budget bill, which started all this stuff in '93, to the issue for sensible gun control just a few weeks ago—he has been our leader in technology policy, in trying to hook up every classroom in the country to computers, in making sure that we had an E-rate so poor schools could afford to do it. He's run the empowerment zone program, which has brought thousands of jobs into poor neighborhoods. He ran our partnership with Detroit to try to develop high mileage vehicles, and it won't be long until you'll be able to buy a car that will get 80 miles a gallon; and a couple years after that, you'll be able to buy one made with biofuel, where the conversion ratio is a gallon of gasoline to make 8 gallons of that, and then you'll be getting 500 miles to the gallon, and the world will be different. And he did that. That's what he did. He ran our reinventing Government program that has given us the smallest Government in 40 years. And I heard all this talk about tough decisions. He supported me on the budget, on Bosnia, on Kosovo, on Haiti, on giving aid to Mexico when the people were 81-15 against it, on taking on the gun lobby and the tobacco lobby for the first time that any White House has consistently done that. And he was an ardent supporter of our effort to end discrimination against gays and lesbians early. So he has taken tough decisions.

I want you to know this because this campaign is going to have a lot of twists and turns; there will be ups and downs. But he should be the President of the United States. Nobody has ever done this.

But I will say this. He'll have a lot harder job unless you help us elect six Senators and at least six House Members. As I said, I could tell you a story about every one of these Senators who's here, and our candidate, that would make you feel more strongly. One of things I've learned as President is, I always knew the Senate was important. I admired the whole story of all the great Senators in our history and the great creators. But it's

even more important than I dreamed it was when I became President.

So the investment you've made tonight is a worthy investment. And I just hope when you leave here, some of what I have said has made an impression so that you will take every single, solitary opportunity you have between now and November to tell people why you came tonight, why you stand where you stand, and why this election is so important to our future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Fred Eychaner and Ken Lee; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; event host committee members Joe and Yvonne Stroud, Lou Weisbach, and Bette Cerf Hill; Joseph A. Cari, Jr., finance cochair, Democratic National Committee; Illinois House Speaker Michael J. Madigan; and Governors Thomas R. Carper of Delaware and George W. Bush of Texas. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7310—World Trade Week, 2000

May 19, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

The prosperity the United States enjoys today is due, in no small part, to our strong trading relationships with other nations. The World Trade Organization, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and 270 other agreements have helped us to open new markets for U.S. products and services, create thousands of new jobs, and keep our economy growing without inflation. The African Growth and Opportunity Act and the United States-Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act that I signed into law this week will build on this progress by lowering trade barriers and strengthening our economic partnership with nations in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean basin.

The theme of World Trade Week this year, "Working the Web of Trade," reflects the particular importance of the Internet as a new and rapidly accelerating factor in world