

and operation of State Councils, Protection and Advocacy Systems, University Centers (formerly known as university affiliated programs), and projects of national significance. This crucial investment has provided the structure to assist people with developmental disabilities to pursue meaningful and productive lives. These programs have made community living possible for individuals across our Nation with significant disabilities. The Act has led to further Federal legislation in support of all people with disabilities. Therefore, it is only fitting that I am signing this legislation in the same year as the 25th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

When the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act was first conceived by President Kennedy, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and Dr. Robert Cooke, the primary emphasis was on the advancement of scientific understanding, professional education, and ensuring access to, and safety of, institutional facilities. Later changes, as conceived by Dr. Elizabeth Boggs, Dr. Elsie Helsel, and others, focused on efforts of families, professionals, and State agencies to improve supports for all people with developmental disabilities. Today, the programs emphasize fundamental system change, including legal services and advocacy and capacity-building at the State and local levels. The focus is on listening to people with developmental disabilities as self-advocates, and helping people with developmental disabilities and their families obtain the information, assistive technology, and supports they need to make more informed choices about how and where to live. An important aspect of today's work is to ensure self-determination and access to supports for historically unserved and underserved populations across the Nation. To ensure continued progress in these areas, S. 1809 now includes performance-based accountability requirements.

The programs carried out through this Act improve and expand opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. My Administration is committed to working with Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis to address issues of shared concern, and I encourage

the next Administration and Congress to explore ways for this legislation to provide appropriate roles for Indian Tribes and Native Americans pursuant to this legislation.

Investments in the freedom and the future of Americans with significant, lifelong disabilities are important investments in the well-being of our Nation. For these reasons, I am pleased to sign the "Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000."

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 30, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1809, approved October 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-402.

Remarks at a Reception for African-American Religious Leaders

October 30, 2000

Thank you. Well, that was a monumental introduction. [*Laughter*] I asked Billy if he thought there was another church anywhere in America named Monumental. But it was a monumental introduction. He was reminding me—we were standing up here—that we met the first time at the civil rights museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. I was there looking at the exhibit where the statue of Daisy Bates faces the statue of Governor Faubus. The country has come a long way since then, thanks in no small measure to people like all of you. And I welcome you here.

I want to thank Rodney Slater—we've worked together almost 20 years—and my friend Caroll Willis. They came to work for me when I was running for Governor in 1982, and I was trying to do something that had never been done before. I had been elected; then I had been defeated; and I was trying to get elected again. And since you can't tell the voters they made a mistake, that's a pretty hard deal to sell. But we figured it out somehow.

I want to thank Ben Johnson, who runs our One America office here; Alvin Brown, who runs the community empowerment program that Vice President Gore has led so well; Reverend Zina Pierre, who works for

us here in Intergovernmental Affairs; and all the other people at the White House.

Later this week we're going to start a month-long celebration of the 200th anniversary of the White House. George Washington is the only President who never lived here, even though he commissioned this house and had the competition for the architectural plans. We've got downstairs a copy of the drawings that Thomas Jefferson presented anonymously, and he got beat in the competition by an Irish architect named James Hoban.

In the first of November 1800, John and Abigail Adams moved in here, and there was no furniture here. And Mrs. Adams hung up the wash in this room. So the room has kind of come a long way in the last 200 years, too. *[Laughter]* I think this is a pretty good way to begin the observance of the 200th anniversary of this grand old house, by having all of you here.

I also would like to especially note the presence in the audience of the two pastors who hosted me yesterday. I was out making visits, and Reverend Wallace Charles Smith of the Shiloh Baptist Church here in Washington and Reverend John Peterson of the Alfred Street Baptist Church of Alexandria, Virginia, thank you for having me yesterday. I had a great time. And I appreciate that.

I asked you to come here for two reasons today; first and foremost, to say thank you. Thank you for giving me the chance to serve. Thank you for urging me along the way to try to get me to serve better. Thank you for watching my back and always pushing me ahead at the same time. Thank you. It's been a great 8 years, and I've got 11 weeks more, and I'm going to milk everything I can out of it for the American people—*[laughter]*—do every good thing I can possibly get done.

And the Republicans—we've actually made a bunch of agreements with them here that have been good for the American people. I thought we had one on schools last night; it's the best one that we've ever had in 8 years. And then today they decided it wasn't such a good agreement after all. They're kind of drawing back. But maybe I can—if you all pray over them tonight, maybe I can get them to come on back here and do this agreement we made last night.

So I thank you for that. The second thing, obviously, is that I wanted to say a few words about today and tomorrow. In America, our public life is always about tomorrow, and that's the thing that I appreciate so much. I look out here in this room, and I see people I've known here for over 20 years. And you still come because you don't get tired doing good. You know that that's the admonition of the Scripture, and you're still doing it.

And I thank you for that. But we have to look ahead here. And I'm going to—when the Congress goes home, I'm going to go out and make a few visits around the country and try to do what I can to persuade the people that they ought to go and vote, and they need to understand what the issues are.

But just let me ask you this. If I had told you 8 years ago that, by now, we'd all come here and gather, and we'd have 22 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest African-American unemployment rate ever recorded and the biggest drop in child poverty in 35 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the highest homeownership in history; that we would have the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years; that we'd have people without health insurance, the number of those folks going down for the first time in a dozen years; that the dropout rate would be down; the test scores would be up; the African-American high school graduation rate would equal the white rate for the first time in history; there would be a 500 percent increase in the number of African-American kids taking advanced placement courses, with the highest college-going rate in history; and that, oh, by the way, we'd have a decline in teen pregnancy to historic lows, a big drop in teenage drug use, and cleaner air, cleaner water, safer drinking water, safer food; more land set aside for the future of all generations than at any time since Theodore Roosevelt was President, almost 100 years ago—if I told you that 8 years ago, would you have believed these were 8 years well-spent that we did together? I think it's pretty good.

Now, so here's what I want to say. It's always about tomorrow. Our Founders were smart people. I mean, they were real smart,

you know? They knew that God didn't only create white male property owners. When they said we're all created equal, they didn't say only white male property owners were created equal. And they knew that they weren't exactly living up to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. And that's why they committed us to an eternal journey toward "a more perfect Union," right? They were smart. They knew there would never be a perfect Union. They never said, "We're going to make a perfect Union." They said, "We have joined together to make 'a more perfect Union,'" which meant that every succession of Americans down all the way to the end of time would always know they had something to do to measure up to these absolute ideals.

Now, 8 years ago, we had a troubled economy, a divided society, and a paralyzed political system. Today, we've got the strongest economy in history. We're making progress in all areas of the society. We are more united than we were before. We entered this new century and this new millennium in very good shape. And now, before the American people looms an election, the first election of the 21st century. And people will decide in 8 days who the new President and Vice President will be, who will be in the United States Senate, who will be in the United States Congress, and a number of other important elections. They will decide by how they vote, and they will decide by whether they vote.

Because, make no mistake about it, not voting is a decision. That's a decision to let somebody who disagrees with you have their way. So I want you in the days that remain to make sure that everybody knows what the choices are and what the consequences are.

In my lifetime we have never had an election like this—ever. Not once have we ever had an election with so much prosperity, so much social progress, with the absence of a domestic crisis or a threat to our security from around the world. Are there problems at home and abroad? Of course, there are. There always will be, down to the end of time. Scripture says that. But we have never, ever, ever held an election in this sort of environment before, not in the lifetime of anybody in this room.

Is that right? And sometimes it's harder to make a good decision in good times than bad times. Anybody that's over 30 has made a decision and a mistake at some point in your life not because things were going so badly, but because they were going so well, you thought you had to—you could just stop concentrating. Isn't that right? So what does America have to do in the next 8 days? Concentrate.

This is a very important time. We may never have another time in our lifetimes like this to build the future of our dreams for our children. And I would just like to make a couple of statements about it. Number one, in order to do what we need to do, we've got to keep this prosperity going and expand it. And if you want to do that, we've got to keep paying down the debt and investing in our future.

The Vice President wants to pay down the debt and take the money that's left after you get on the schedule to pay the debt down and use that to invest in education, health care, the environment, national security, and give the people a tax cut we can afford. Why is that important? Because as long as you're paying down the debt, you'll keep interest rates lower—interest rates lower for your parishioners, for a decade, a percent a year a decade—\$390 billion in lower home mortgages, \$30 billion in lower monthly car payments, \$15 billion in lower college loan payments. Never mind the credit cards or the business loans—cheaper—which means more businesses, more jobs, and a better stock market.

It's really important. People ask me all the time, "What great new idea did you and Bob Rubin bring to Washington?" And I always say, "Arithmetic." [Laughter] We brought—now you laugh, but this is serious. You've got to talk to folks about this. Everybody can understand this. We brought arithmetic back to Washington. How many times did they tell you the budget was going to be balanced, you know, that this money was going to appear out of thin air? How many times did we hear that? And the deficit was bigger and bigger and bigger, and the debt of this country quadrupled. Now we're paying it down.

We will have paid over \$340 billion of the national debt when I leave office—paying it

down. And that's why interest rates are down, and that's why the economy has worked.

And this is a message that I think African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, and all other Americans ought to hear together. We've got to keep arithmetic here. You know, this is a job. It's not just a speech; it's a job. And one of the jobs is to be the monitor of the arithmetic. I'm just telling you, it's arithmetic.

And I know it's hard for folks—it may be even hard for you; sometimes it's hard for me—to keep up with a trillion here and a trillion there, you know? How many zeroes is that? But if the surplus is supposed to be \$2 trillion—and that's high; believe me, it won't be that high because of the money that's been spent in this Congress—true. And our friends in the other party, they say, “We want a tax cut that plus interest is 1.6, and we would like to privatize Social Security, a little bit, and that's 1.” Forget about the zeroes, 1.6 and 1. “And we want to spend some money, too, about a half a trillion.” That's 0.5. Well, if you add 1.6 and 1 and 0.5 together, you've got 3.1. And arithmetic says that's bigger than 2. [*Laughter*]

That means you're back into deficit; you've got higher interest rates; you're spending all that Social Security money everybody has promised not to spend. Now, this is not rocket science; this is arithmetic. But everybody in America can understand it if they know it.

I've worked so hard. I don't know what else I can do to turn this economy around. We've worked hard on it. We've tried to stay on top of it. You know, there have been a lot of sophisticated decisions around the edges, and we've worked to expand trade and an increase in education and training and all that. But it all begins with arithmetic. You get the arithmetic wrong in a country; you have to pay the price just like you get the arithmetic wrong on your check book.

So that's the first thing I hope you'll tell people. The Vice President was part of every important budget decision we made. He cast the tie-breaking vote for the economic plan in 1993. He understands the price we've all paid to make the arithmetic work and how important it is to keep the expansion going.

The second point I want to make is, there are honest differences here. I'm so pleased that this has been basically a positive campaign and people aren't bad-mouthing each other too much. I like that. Why do we have to say anything bad about our opponents? They're not our enemies, after all; they're just our opponents. This is America. So we've been able to say, “Okay, all these folks are good folks. They love their families. They love their country, and they have different ideas.” But, you know, they have different ideas. [*Laughter*]

And if the crime rate is lower and the number of people without health insurance is going down and test scores are going up and the college-going rate is at an all-time high and the environment is getting cleaner and the Vice President wants to build on the ideas and the progress instead of reverse the policies, it seems to me that ought to be worth something.

So, question number one, do you want to keep the prosperity going and extend it to people who have been left behind? Question number two, do you want to build on the social progress? Question number three, what about one America? How are we going to go forward together?

Should we have hate crimes legislation or not? Should we have a Medicare prescription drug program that applies to all of our seniors who need it, or just some? Should we have a Patients' Bill of Rights that really gives everybody the right to be protected and let their doctors make their medical decisions? Should we have stronger enforcement of the equal pay for women law, or not? Should we keep trying to improve affirmative action but not end it, or not?

What kind of people should be on the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals? And is this new trend that we've seen from the conservative majority that now is only five, of restricting, restricting, restricting the Federal Government's authority to enact legislation to protect and promote the interests of the America people—is that a good trend, or not?

And what about the role of the President as not just the doer but the stopper? Would it be a good thing if the Republican party had the White House and the Senate and

the House, with no one there to say no if they had another 1995 where they voted to abolish the Department of Education and had the biggest education and environmental cuts in history and the highest Medicare premiums, or not? Would that be a good thing? People need to think.

But if you ask me what counts, I think what counts is: One, keeping the prosperity going; two, building on the progress, not reversing it; three, keep working for one America; four, have a President who's there in case the Congress tries to go too far in one direction; and five, have somebody there that you know you can count on in a crisis.

I'll tell you, we've been through some. When we tried to turn back the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, Al Gore was there. When we worked for peace in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, Al Gore was there. When we had to decide whether to give financial aid to Mexico when a poll said 81 percent of the American people were against it and I had to decide in 5 minutes whether to do it or not, Al Gore was there.

And I could give you countless other examples. The Vice President has demonstrated conclusively since the convention that he is an independent person, that he will be his own President. But I can tell you what I know from 8 years. He is a good person who will be a great President.

And, you know, I'm not running for anything this year. Most days I'm okay about it. I've had so much fun working for Hillary and working for Al. I've had so much fun. I must say, I used to not understand it when Hillary used to tell me she just hated to come to my debates. Now I can't even watch one of hers in front of somebody else. I just get nervous as a cat, you know?

This is very interesting to—role for me, but I do feel that the country has been so good to me; I have been so blessed. I got to serve here, and I have learned things here that maybe you can only learn when you've been President. But I know this: I know we've got to keep this prosperity going because we haven't yet embraced everybody. And we've got a lot of work to do on that. I know if you've got a policy that's driving down crime and driving down welfare and improving the environment without hurting

the economy, and giving health insurance to more people and improving education and turning around failing schools, we ought to be building on it, not walking away from it.

I know that as long as we're coming together across racial and religious and the other lines that divide us, we're going to be okay, because the American people are smart people. They'll get it figured out, whatever the problems are. And I know that this office would be well served by someone who really knows and understands the challenges it faces, who can be a restraining influence if the elements in the other party in Congress try to go too far, and who desperately wants the best for this country in the future.

Now, these are simple little arguments, starting with arithmetic, going to sticking with what works, going to the fact that we all have got to go forward together, going to the fact that hard work and experience and a proven record of making good decisions counts for something. If you can just make those arguments and then contrast them and let people decide what they agree with on the consequences, then we should be happy, however this election comes out, because that's what America is about. But, you know, if our folks show and they know, you know what will happen. If you get show and know, you know what will happen.

This election is not fundamentally about race, although there are still racial issues to be resolved and racial outreach to be done. But if you raise the minimum wage, that helps everybody. And if you don't, it hurts everybody. If we have hate crimes legislation, I think it makes everybody stronger. I don't think that—I think the overwhelming majority of white Americans and Americans without regard to party, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, favor that. It's just one of—it's the same thing with the Patients' Bill of Rights.

But there's so much to be done; all the best stuff is still out there, stuff we can do on education and health care and economic opportunity, in science and technology. But you've got to remember these simple things: You've got to make the economy go with arithmetic; you've got to build on the social progress, not reverse it; you've got to build one America; and you've got to have a strong

leader who understands these issues, not afraid to take a stand, with a proven record of achievement that will deliver for you and deliver for you. Ask Billy Kyles. Billy Kyles knows Al Gore as well as anybody in this room today, except me.

So this is an unusual election. We normally have some terrible thing that we're all full of anxiety about. Now we've got to go out and whip people up about positive things. We want everybody to be happy but empowered, not threatened but free to have a vision, not looking down on anybody but trying to lift up everybody.

This is going to be an interesting exercise in civics, to see if we can handle all this prosperity and this good news and make it through. But, you know, most of the time the American people get it right, or we wouldn't be around here after 224 years. And when we have these big forks in the road, they normally make the right decision, or all of us sure wouldn't be here, either because of the color of our skins or because we were the first ones in our family to get any kind of a decent education.

This is a very great country. It moves in mysterious ways. But clarity is our friend here. You just think about that. I told the Congress the other day what I'll tell you. When you walk out of here, I want you to imagine yourself as America's weather corps for one more week, and you're going to go out there and make it clear.

When I was a kid, we had a guy in my home State that tried to make a killing off the farmers because he said he could make it rain. He thought he could make it rain. People actually paid him to go up and get in a little airplane and drop pellets in the clouds, you know? And they're still waiting. [Laughter]

You don't want to make it rain. You want to make it clear. You want to make the Sun shine. You want to make all these issues bright and shiny and crystal and simple and direct. This is not complicated. The American people are fortunate they have two clear, very different choices; two good people who love their country and will do exactly what they intend. [Laughter] And this is good. I mean, we're laughing. This is a good thing.

This is about keeping the prosperity going, not putting it at risk; building on the progress, not reversing it; continuing to build one America with everything from the court appointments to the executive appointments to the advocacy of legislation; relating to the rest of the world, including Africa and Latin America and places that have been left behind before we came along. I saw the way you responded to that with genuine seasoned judgment and wisdom and passion.

Listen, we've got a good nominee. We've got a good leader. We've got a good story to tell. Just ask people to remember what it was like 8 years ago, what it's like now. And then ask people to imagine what they want it to be 4 and 8 years from now.

Just lift people up. Get everybody to take a deep breath. Blow the clouds away. Be America's weather corps. We'll have a great celebration in 8 days.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:13 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Samuel (Billy) Kyles, pastor, Monumental Baptist Church of Memphis, TN; Caroll Willis, director, community service division, Democratic National Committee; and former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin.

Statement on Returning Without Approval to the House of Representatives the Legislative Branch and the Treasury and General Appropriations Act, 2001

October 30, 2000

I am returning herewith without my approval, H.R. 4516, the Legislative Branch and the Treasury and General Appropriations Act, 2001. This bill provides funds for the legislative branch and the White House at a time when the business of the American people remains unfinished.

The Congress' continued refusal to focus on the priorities of the American people leaves me no alternative but to veto this bill. I cannot in good conscience sign a bill that funds the operations of the Congress and the White House before funding our classrooms,