

Teleconference on the Rededication of the Mark Twain Memorial
Lighthouse at Hannibal, Missouri
July 2, 1994

Representative Harold Volkmer. Mr. President?

The President. Harold, how are you?

Representative Volkmer. Just fine, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

The President. It's great to hear your voice.

Representative Volkmer. It's great to be here. Can everybody hear me? Can you hear the President?

Okay, Mr. President, we've got a nice crowd here, and we're getting ready to light this lighthouse in memory and to remember Mark Twain, on behalf of Mark Twain, our favorite son.

The President. Let me say, first of all, I'm glad to be back in Hannibal again, at least by telephone. I had a wonderful, wonderful visit there.

Representative Volkmer. Yes, we well remember, and we're almost in the very same spot that you were in at that time, just a little bit up the street, not very far.

The President. Well, I'm a great admirer of Mark Twain, and I read him as a boy and read him as an adult. So I'm very happy to be part of it. And I know that President Roosevelt in 1935 and President Kennedy in 1963 also played a role in this memorial lighthouse. So I'm glad to be a part of that history of your community. And I'm also glad to be back with all the enthusiastic people who live there. I remember them so well, and I want to congratulate you and the citizens of Hannibal and Marion County and also the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for all the work you've done to restore the lighthouse. It really symbolizes the community and your vision and the great history of Mark Twain.

[*Representative Volkmer thanked the President and wished him a happy Fourth of July.*]

The President. I'm really glad to be here. My family and I are up in Camp David, and we're having a wonderful time and looking forward to celebrating our Nation's birthday and watching our soccer team play. But I'm really glad I got to do this. I love Hannibal. I think it's one of the greatest places I've been. And as I said, it's captured my imagination ever since

I was a little boy. So I'm delighted to be a part of this.

[*Representative Volkmer invited the President to visit Hannibal, MO.*]

The President. Are you going to light the candle, is that what you're going to do? Everybody going to light a candle?

Representative Volkmer. Well, we're ready. I'd like to—for you to, if you have—

The President. I've got it.

[*Representative Volkmer introduced Karol Mueller, director of the Main Street Program.*]

Karol Mueller. Hello.

The President. Hello, Karol. Congratulations on all the work you've done. You're the director of the Main Street Program, aren't you?

Ms. Mueller. I am—

The President. I love that program. And I tell you, you've done a wonderful job there.

Ms. Mueller. Well, thank you. I wish I could take all the credit, but I can't. It's truly a community effort. We have a great crew behind us, a great Main Street Program, and great architects, and we've done it together.

The President. Good for you. Well, I'm glad to be a part of it. And I'm really glad that Congressman Volkmer gave me a chance to call in tonight.

Ms. Mueller. Well, we sure appreciate his assistance on this project as well.

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Mueller. Are we ready to light it?

The President. Are you ready? I've got a candle here.

Ms. Mueller. Okay, I'm going to hand you back to Congressman Volkmer.

Representative Volkmer. All right, Mr. President.

The President. You'll have to visualize my candle, folks, but I've got one here.

[*Representative Volkmer described the ceremony and said that Mayor Richard Schwartz of Hannibal was a participant.*]

The President. I remember the mayor well, yes.

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[Representative Volkmer said that Henry Sweets, curator of the Mark Twain Home and Museum, was also participating in the event and mentioned that his own wife, Shirley, and their grandchildren were there as well.]

The President. That's good. Well, tell Shirley and your grandchildren hello. I know it's good to have them there for the Fourth of July.

Representative Volkmer. Yes, it is. The grandchildren jumped frogs this morning, and they're going to be in a parade come Monday.

The President. They jumped frogs, is that—

Representative Volkmer. Oh yes. Yes, we have a frog-jumping contest.

The President. I used to be in one of those every year.

Representative Volkmer. Is that right?

The President. Yes, we've got a ferry about 30 miles from Little Rock, in Arkansas, called Toad Suck Ferry. And every year we had a Toad Suck Day, and we all raced our frogs.

Representative Volkmer. Very good.

The President. I never won, but I always loved it. I competed every year, but I never won.

Representative Volkmer. All right, they're ready to go.

The President. We're ready.

Representative Volkmer. Anytime you're ready to light, we're ready to light.

The President. I have just lit my candle.

Representative Volkmer. Very good. Let's see if it works.

The President. I've always believed it was better to light a candle than curse the darkness. Now, the whole town of Hannibal's done the same thing.

Representative Volkmer. Yes, that's right, and we're all waiting, and it's coming closer, and it's coming closer—there's one more. The switch should go—ahh, there it is.

The President. Good for you.

Representative Volkmer. All right, there it is, Mr. President. Thank you very, very much, Mr. President. Tell Hillary hello for us.

The President. I'll do it. Thank you, Congressman.

Representative Volkmer. And you all have a real nice Fourth.

The President. Tell everybody hello. Thank you, and God bless you.

Representative Volkmer. Thank you very much.

The President. Goodbye.

NOTE: The teleconference began at 10:45 p.m. The President spoke from Camp David, MD.

Statement on Senate Action on Health Care Reform Legislation July 2, 1994

The action of the Senate Finance Committee today moves health care reform another step closer to final passage.

Chairman Moynihan has worked diligently to make sure his committee produced a bill to debate on the Senate floor. His commitment to universal coverage has been clear throughout this process, and I look forward to his continued leadership as we move toward guaranteed health coverage for every American.

I remain firmly committed to guaranteed health coverage for every American that can never be taken away. We must achieve universal coverage if we are to reform our health care system and assure hard-working, middle class Americans that they will have health care when they need it. I am confident that we will achieve the goal of guaranteed coverage for everyone this year, and I look forward to the debate in the full House and Senate.