

Mar. 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Unemployment is low, job growth is strong, our economy is expanding at a healthy pace. We are uniquely poised now to widen the circle of opportunity for the 21st century. Passing the “GI bill” for America’s workers is one of the best ways we can continue to grow.

Thank you, and thank you to the economic team, and congratulations to the American people. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Senate Action To Continue the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Initiative March 6, 1998

I am pleased that the Senate, in a strong bipartisan vote of 58 to 37, today retained the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program within the ISTEA bill, which provides expanded economic opportunity for women- and minority-owned businesses. This program was enacted into law under President Reagan in response to extremely low participation rates by women and minorities in federally assisted highway and transit construction projects.

In particular, I want to applaud Senators Baucus and Chafee, who garnered widespread support for the continuation of this important program.

Today’s vote reaffirms my administration’s “Amend it; don’t end it” approach to affirmative action and promoting equal opportunity. We are now one step closer to getting an important, multi-billion transportation bill enacted into legislation.

Remarks at the Second Millennium Evening at the White House March 6, 1998

The President. Thank you very much. And Dr. Hawking, you’ll have to forgive me, I’m a little hoarse. I hope for some genetic improvement sometime in the next year or so. [*Laughter*]

Ladies and gentlemen, this was a stunning event for me and, I hope, for all of you. Yesterday Stephen and Elaine came by the White House to see Hillary and me and, as you can imagine, like Hillary, I had reread “A Brief History of Time,” and I was utterly terrified—[*laughter*—that he would say something like, you know, “I went to University College Oxford, too,” and then he would ask me some incredible comparative academic question about our experiences there. Instead, he said, “Was the food just as bad when you were there?”—[*laughter*—which was a wonderful relief. [*Laughter*]

Albert Einstein once said, because politics is for the present but an equation is something for eternity, equations were more important than politics. I don’t know about the politics

part, but Professor Hawking’s insights into equations have altered our notions of time and the very nature of eternity itself. Tonight he’s given us a lot to think about, even the ability to imagine a future in which we as humans will have finally captured the holy grail of physics, reconciling the infinitesimal with the infinite, presenting the world with the ultimate theory of everything. Now, when a physicist does that, he can totally ignore politics and buy a newspaper. [*Laughter*]

The one thing I liked most about thinking about the future in Professor Hawking’s term is that even when we reach the era of “Star Trek,” which will make a lot of our children very happy, it won’t be so static. It will still be human and dynamic. And according to the visuals accompanying the lecture, it will still matter whether you can bluff at poker, which is encouraging. [*Laughter*]

I want to get on with the questions now. And again, I want to thank Professor Hawking