

a decision before I was ready to. And that carried through in the kind of support that you gave us here and the kind of interest you showed then and do show now and in kind of letting us take the lead and listen to what people on the central coast of California were telling us about what are their important issues.

And you remember, Mr. President, I said when—in the midst of the campaign when I heard the State of the Union speech, I said to someone with whom I was with, it sounded as though you were walking among the people here on the central coast with us. And that's how much this resonates here. The issues of child care, the issues of our local schools and health care and the economy staying strong and keeping Social Security solvent, these are the refrains that we have heard and responded to.

And I believe, you know, it's across party lines. It's what the mainstream of, I can tell you for sure, one district in California, the 22d, really has compelled me to carry to Washington. And I'm so thankful that now I can do that, having paid attention to them and able to listen and join in the conversation there that you all have going.

President Clinton. Well, thank you. You know, we've only got 68 days left.

Representative-Elect Capps. Okay.

President Clinton. We need you.

Representative-Elect Capps. We'd better get busy.

Vice President Gore. Lois, this is Al Gore.

Representative-Elect Capps. Hello.

Vice President Gore. This is Al Gore, Lois. And I also want to congratulate you on running

a fantastic race. And it was about the issues that Americans really care about and the future of education, the environment, technology and schools, child care, the others that you mentioned. And we all look forward to working very closely with you on those issues and on improving the lives of the American people. And God bless your family and Walter's memory.

Representative-Elect Capps. Thank you.

Vice President Gore. And we miss Laura. She did a great job for you.

Representative-Elect Capps. Well, she has. She's coming back soon. She's excited to get back there, as well. And Mr. Gore, thank you. You just touched on all of the issues that we are going to be working on together.

Vice President Gore. Great. God bless.

President Clinton. Lois, we need you. We'll be glad when you get here.

Representative-Elect Capps. I'm hurrying up. We'll be there soon.

President Clinton. Give our love to Laura. I'll see you.

Representative-Elect Capps. Thank you so much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:57 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Representative-Elect Capps' daughter, Laura, Staff Director for the Office of Speechwriting at the White House. Lois Capps was elected Representative of California's 22d Congressional District in a special election on March 10, to succeed her husband, Representative Walter Capps, who died on October 28, 1997.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Legislation To Promote African Growth and Opportunity

March 11, 1998

In this year's State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to support an initiative to strengthen economic ties to Africa. Today, I am pleased that Congress has taken an important step forward on legislation that will open a new era of U.S.-African trade and investment relations. The strong bipartisan vote in the House in support of the "African Growth and Oppor-

tunity Act" offers the way for a brighter future for Africa.

The United States has a vital stake in a stable, prosperous Africa. Later this month, when I travel to Africa, I will deliver the message that the United States stands ready to be a partner in Africa's prosperity. A majority of sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries have adopted market-oriented economic and political reforms in the past

seven years. A stronger, stable, prosperous Africa will be a better economic partner, a better partner for security and peace, and a better partner in the fight against the new transnational threats of drug trafficking, crime, terrorism, the spread of disease and environmental degradation. This bill—by significantly broadening market access, spurring growth in Africa, and helping the poorest nations eliminate or reduce their bilateral debt—would help African nations that are committed to undertake difficult economic reforms to build better lives for their people.

We have an historic opportunity to support the renaissance in Africa. I want to commend Speaker Gingrich, Chairman Archer, Congressman Rangel, Congressman McDermott, Congressman Crane, Chairman Gilman, Congressman Hamilton, Congressman Payne, Congresswoman McKinney, Congressman Jefferson, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, Congresswoman Waters, Congressman Royce, Congressman Menendez, and all those who have devoted themselves to helping that transformation. I look forward to working with the Senate to enact this landmark legislation as quickly as possible.

Remarks to the National Association of Attorneys General *March 12, 1998*

Thank you very much, Attorney General Doyle. Attorney General Reno, thank you for joining us here today and for the work you have done with the States' attorneys general and local prosecutors on domestic violence and to reduce the crime rate and a whole host of other issues. I want to thank Fred DuVal for the work he does on my behalf with you and this association. And I'd also like to thank the two former attorneys general that are working for me: Bonnie Campbell, who heads the Attorney General's effort on violence against women; and Chuck Burson, who was formerly president of NAAG, now the Vice President's Counsel.

I've really been looking forward to coming over here today. I have had the opportunity to know and work with most of you personally, and I see some former attorneys general out in the audience who were my colleagues and friends. I thank them for being here.

It used to be a staple of all my speeches that the best job I ever had was being an attorney general, and to me it was. I didn't have to hire or fire anybody—[*laughter*—except the people on the staff. I didn't have to appoint or disappoint anybody. [*Laughter*] Every unpopular thing I did I blamed on the Constitution. [*Laughter*] Now, I'm just a punching bag from time to time—[*laughter*—who's grateful to have an Attorney General. It's a very interesting thing. [*Laughter*]

On a more serious note, I loved the job that you now hold. And I suspect that I ran for

it for the same reason you did: I wanted to protect families and consumers and enforce the law. And you have been very strong allies of our administration and good partners in those endeavors, and I thank you for that very much. In many ways, we are still colleagues, whether it's on domestic violence or reducing crime or giving our young people a more positive future.

Now we're working together to bring our country to the verge of one of the greatest public health achievements in the history of our Nation, a historic triumph in our fight to protect our children from the deadly threat of tobacco. Together we have waged a great struggle in the courts, in the Congress, across the negotiation tables and in our communities, where our children have been the targets of mass-marketing schemes and where you have been on the frontlines to protect them from this effort to get them involved in addiction to tobacco.

We've made a lot of great strides in just a few years. And whenever I talk to any of you who are involved in this, naturally enough, we're always talking about what the present state of play is and what all the various issues are and what's going to happen tomorrow or what happened yesterday. And we can talk about that some more, too. But what I'd like to do is take just a few moments to see how far we've come and then to visualize the outcome that I believe we will achieve—first, to look back and see why we ever took on the tobacco companies in the first place when, when some of