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

for the extraordinary clarity and vigor of his presentation and for sharing his time with us tonight and for placing this particular moment in the larger spectrum of time—which I think if we all could do more and more clearly every day, we would live happier, more productive lives.

Thank you, Professor.

Ellen, would you like to take over and bring in the questions?

[*At this point, the question-and-answer portion of the program proceeded.*]

The President. Dr. Hawking, our position is we have repealed that law. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, first of all, in defense of my Vice President, you will all understand that he would love to be here, but there is a peculiar gravitational force in New Hampshire that manifests itself with a remarkable regularity. [*Laughter*] Let me also say that in the visual presentation accompanying Dr. Hawking's lecture, there was that remarkable project stamped "canceled" on it. This administration opposed the cancellation of it, I'm proud to say. [*Laughter*] But we hope that the Swiss project will take up the slack.

There's so many questions I know you would all like to ask. We have hundreds of questions coming in, and one of the questions I wish there were time to explore is, if we do, in fact, acquire a general understanding that time and space are more multidimensional than we had imagined, and computers become ever more sophisticated, even if people will never be able to travel at the speed of light, will we be able to communicate some day in some ways that destroy our common notions of time?

I've thought about it a lot, and I'm not smart enough to know what the answer is, but I'd love to—that's one of the reasons I enjoyed re-reading the book.

Let me also say one other thing to close—since our Nobel laureate talked about his faith about how the world began—the First Lady started tonight by talking about the marvels of technology which enable this astonishing man to communicate with us. And it is true that he is here and we did this because of the marvels of technology. It is also true, in my mind, that he is a genuine living miracle because of the power of the heart and the spirit. And we can only hope that all the advances that he has foreseen for us tonight in human knowledge will serve to amplify the heart and the spirit that we have humbly witnessed this evening.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:17 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Stephen W. Hawking, Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, who gave the second lecture in the Millennium series, entitled "Imagination and Change: Science in the Next Millennium"; Professor Hawking's wife, Elaine; Ellen Lovell, Director, White House Millennium Council; and William D. Phillips, 1997 Nobel laureate in physics. The President also referred to the canceled superconducting super collider project. Professor Hawking, who suffers from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, spoke with the aid of a computerized voice synthesizer.

The President's Radio Address
March 7, 1998

Good morning. Since I took office I've done everything in my power to protect our children from harm. We've worked to make their streets and their schools safer, to give them something positive to do after school and before their parents get home. We've worked to teach our children that drugs are dangerous, illegal, and wrong. This week we took a major step to protect our children, indeed all Americans, from the dangers of drunk driving by proposing bipartisan legislation to lower the legal limit to .08 in every State.

Today I want to talk to you about the historic opportunity we now have to protect our Nation's children from an even more deadly threat, smoking. Smoking kills more people every day