

Now, let me just tell you what this is about. That's what this election is about. We had a bill that did that. In the House the Republicans passed a bill that didn't guarantee the emergency room, didn't guarantee the specialist, didn't guarantee your treatment couldn't be interrupted, didn't guarantee your privacy, and left 100 million Americans out of what little bit it did do. And in the Senate, when they tried to bring up our bill, the Senate was so concerned that they would have to vote against our bill to stay with the insurance companies that the leader of the Senate shut the Senate down for 4 hours in a panic, so it could die by stealth.

Now, that's what this election is about: real people, somebody making a minimum wage. That's worth going out to vote for—killing the minimum wage at a time when we have low unemployment and low inflation, when we all believe in the principle that everyone should participate in this prosperity—12 million people who are working hard, not on welfare, trying to do their part, paying their taxes.

We've got an economic program up there that the Vice President and Secretary Cuomo developed to put more investment, more free enterprise jobs in inner-city areas and rural areas and on Indian reservations where people haven't felt this recovery. If we can't give them a chance to be part of the American dream now, with the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, when in the world will we ever get around to doing it? When will we ever do it?

Look, this is serious. You need to go back home and say, every time you see one of their ads on television, you say to yourself, "Well, why did you kill the education program? Why did you kill the Patients' Bill of Rights? Why did you kill the environmental initiatives? Why did you kill campaign finance reform? Why did you kill the tobacco legislation? Why did you

kill minimum wage? What are we doing here anyway?"

This is a better country today because we have worked on the people's needs. And whenever we could, we have reached out to the Republicans and invited them to join us. They made all these decisions this year, not me. They have been in the majority.

With all this financial turmoil going on around the world, I have asked for 8 long months to simply pay our contribution to the International Monetary Fund, just so we could grow and keep growing and keep creating American jobs.

So I say to you, I want you to go home, and I want you to tell everybody the country is doing well, we're better off than we were 6 years ago because we followed the right policies. But we've got a lot to do. We've got to save Social Security first. We've got to give our kids the best schools in the world. We've got to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We've got to keep improving the environment. We've got to keep this economic growth going.

Now, if you want progress, vote for us; if you want partisanship, vote for them. If you want to vote for people, vote for us; if you want to vote for politics, vote for them. We'll prove M&M's doesn't amount to anything compared to the principle, the power, and the passion of the American people and the people's party.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, and Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; Mayor Susan Hammer of San Jose, CA; and Mayor Robert Pastrick of East Chicago, IN.

## Remarks on Legislative Priorities and an Exchange With Reporters September 25, 1998

### *Hurricane Georges*

*The President.* Good morning. For the past several days Hurricane Georges has torn through the Caribbean, costing many lives. Now, as we

speak, the hurricane is bearing down on south Florida. I have spoken several times with FEMA director, James Lee Witt. For the past day, an emergency response team has been on the

ground working with the government and the people of Florida to prepare for the storm. We are as ready as we can be, and we pray that the human and material costs will be limited. In the coming days, we will work as closely as possible with the State of Florida to provide whatever assistance will do the most good.

#### *Continuing Resolution*

A few moments ago I signed stop-gap legislation to keep the Government open and running at the start of the new fiscal year. The legislation is a regrettable sign that the Republican majority in Congress has failed to address the urgent priorities of the American people. There is only one week left in this fiscal year, yet the Congress has passed and sent me only one of the 13 appropriations bills to fund the operation of the United States Government. And the Congress is 5 months past the legal deadline for passing a budget resolution.

By failing to meet its most basic governing responsibility, the Republican majority in Congress has its priorities wrong: partisanship over progress, politics over people. Moreover, on key national goals—improving education, providing affordable child care, expanding health coverage, protecting our environment, stabilizing the international economy—the House of Representatives, in fact, is moving in the wrong direction. For example, at a time when opportunity depends on education more than ever before, neither Chamber has even brought the education funding bill to a vote. And the House is preparing to deny funding for smaller classes, to cut after-school programs, to cut technology in the classroom, to eliminate summer jobs. At the same time, some lawmakers have attached con-

troversial and unrelated provisions guaranteed to mire these bills in unnecessary delay.

For 6 years, our economic strategy of fiscal responsibility, investing in people, expanding America's exports has spurred lower interest rates and created conditions for the strongest economy in a generation. If we hold fast to fiscal discipline, we will enter a new and promising era of budget surpluses. We must keep our economy growing and use this time to meet the challenges facing our people.

I have laid out a concrete plan of how we can continue on that course to make smart investments, to maintain fiscal discipline, and to set aside the surplus until we have saved Social Security first. I have reached out to Members of Congress in both parties to work toward these ends. It isn't too late. But Congress cannot simply keep passing patchwork spending plans, putting off choices about national priorities until next year, or at least until after the election.

It is time now for Congress to buckle down, to send me the measures to keep the Government open and to invest in education, in health care, in other needs of the American people. It is time to put progress over partisanship. We should do the job the people sent us here to do and strengthen America for the new century.

Thank you very much.

Q. How do you think the Democrats are going to do in the election?

The President. I have nothing to add to what I said.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Chicago, IL. H.J. Res. 128, approved September 25, was assigned Public Law No. 105–240.

## Remarks at Jenner Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois September 25, 1998

Thank you very much. There aren't all that many sixth graders that could do that and be less nervous than she was. She did a great job, didn't she? Thank you, Gina, thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am so glad to be here today. I thank the mayor for his extraordinary work. And I want to thank Secretary

Daley, too, for being a truly remarkable Secretary of Commerce. My old friend John Stroger, thank you for being here. I'd like to thank the board members of the Chicago School Reform Board, Gery Chico and the other members who are here. I thank Paul Vallas, your CEO. I thank your principal; thank you for your