

Remarks on Arrival in West Palm Beach, Florida *October 29, 1998*

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here with Governor Chiles, Senator Graham, Commissioner Nelson, Congressman Deutsch, Congressman Wexler, my good friend Lieutenant Governor MacKay.

I know that along with all other Americans your hearts filled with pride today when you saw our space shuttle lift off with 77-year-old Senator John Glenn among the crew, going into the heavens for the second time—the first time over 36 years ago.

I'm here tonight in South Florida on behalf of our Democratic ticket and specifically for Lieutenant Governor MacKay. And I'd like to make two points. First of all, I hope the pride and the patriotism that the people of Florida and the United States felt this afternoon will carry over until Tuesday and that everyone will feel in their pride an obligation to go to the polls and vote, because this is no ordinary election. In profound ways we are shaping what America will look like and what this State will look like well into the 21st century.

In so many ways the challenges of Florida are the challenges of America. In terms of the education of our children in this last budget battle, thanks to the steadfast support of people like Bob Graham and Peter Deutsch and Rob Wexler, we were able to get a huge downpayment of my goal of putting 100,000 teachers in the early grades.

But it will be up to the Governor of Florida to determine whether we have a real commitment in this State, one of the fastest growing States in the country, for our children to have those smaller class sizes and classes for the children and the teachers to meet. That's a strong reason to support Buddy MacKay's bid for Governor.

And in the next session of Congress we will have to deal with the unfinished business of America in saving Social Security for the 21st century and protecting and reforming Medicare and finally passing a Patients' Bill of Rights.

But here in Florida, there will be a disproportionate impact on all these decisions because there are so many senior citizens. I've known Buddy MacKay a long time, and you know, I'm never surprised by what people do or say in the closing days of an election, but goodness, how anybody could claim that he had ever done anything other than be one of the strongest supporters the seniors of this State and this Nation ever had is a mystery to me, because he certainly has been.

And I will say again, to really do what we need to do for the seniors here, for the integrity of their health care and the security of their retirement and the stability of their lives, requires not only a President and a Congress but a Governor committed to them. That's another big reason to support Buddy MacKay for Governor on Tuesday.

And we're glad to be here. I wish him well. I wish the people of Florida well. And again I say, I hope everyone will be at the polls on Tuesday. If you felt good today, you can feel just that same way on Tuesday by being a good citizen and doing your part.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:52 p.m. at the West Palm Beach International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida; State Insurance Commissioner Bill Nelson; and gubernatorial candidate Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay.