

fraud. We have worked with, and we will continue to work with, those in the provider community who are equally committed to eliminating health care fraud.

We have a long-standing commitment to crack down on fraud, waste, and abuse, and I am proud to say that since 1993, the administration's efforts have saved taxpayers more than \$38 billion, with health care fraud convictions increasing by more than 240 percent. The partnership between providers, the law enforcement community, and beneficiaries created by this ini-

tiative is a critical step towards ending waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare program. Physicians, nurses, hospitals, and nursing homes know that it is in everyone's best interest to weed out the bad-apple providers who threaten our ability to provide high-quality and affordable health care for older Americans.

I congratulate Secretary Shalala, Attorney General Reno, and the AARP for their commitment to preserve the Medicare program and ensure the provision of high-quality, affordable health care to our senior citizens.

Statement on the Resignation of Paul Begala as Counselor to the President *February 24, 1999*

Paul Begala has been a close and trusted adviser since I first sought the Presidency. I value his advice; I appreciate his loyalty; and I treasure his friendship. I am grateful that he has used his razor-sharp mind and wit in the service of core values and the common good. Paul has given long hours to the service of his country,

and he has more than earned the right to seek new horizons, through teaching and writing, and to spend more time with his three young children. I expect he will continue to be a powerful and persuasive voice for the cause we share in years to come. Hillary and I wish him, Diane, and the children all the best.

Remarks at the State Dinner Honoring President Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana

February 24, 1999

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I want to welcome President Rawlings and Mrs. Rawlings and the entire Ghanaian delegation, along with the distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, and our other distinguished guests to the White House. Hillary and I are delighted to see you all here.

There was so much interest and enthusiasm about this dinner that we had to move it from the dining room into the East Room. And you might be interested to know that it was in this room that Thomas Jefferson met with Meriwether Lewis to plan the great Lewis and Clark expedition, which explored the American Continent. It is fitting that we are having this dinner here, almost 200 years later, to chart a new century and to explore our relationship with Ghana and with Africa.

It was no accident that Ghana was our first stop, our gateway to Africa, when Hillary and I and our delegation, the Members of Congress, the administration, and citizens traveled to Africa last year. Mr. President, in the last decade, under your leadership, Ghana has made great strides toward fulfilling President Nkrumah's vision of a proud, strong country.

In important ways, it may even have surpassed that vision. Starting our African journey in a democratic country with a growing economy, a powerful commitment to tolerance at home and peace around the world allowed us to highlight for all Americans the progress that Africa has made and the promise of our future together. It allowed us to reaffirm for all of Africa that the United States is proud and determined to build a partnership of mutual respect with African nations which share our dreams of a better