

and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on Vouchers To Provide Rental Assistance

October 1, 1999

The Department of Housing and Urban Development yesterday released \$280 million in rental assistance vouchers to help 50,000 families in 35 States move from welfare to work. These housing vouchers are an integral part of our efforts to reform welfare, reward work, and provide affordable housing for low-income families. They will help families move close to a job, reduce a long commute, or secure more stable housing that will help them get or keep a job.

Today, our economy is strong, incomes are up, and poverty is at the lowest rate in 20 years. But there are still more than 5 million low-

income families who need affordable housing. That is why I have asked Congress for an additional 100,000 rental assistance vouchers to meet the critical housing needs of families moving from welfare to work, the homeless, and the elderly. As Members of the House and Senate meet in conference to debate this year's budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, I want to underscore my strong commitment to this initiative. Congress should not turn its back on families that are playing by the rules and moving from welfare to work. A budget without new vouchers would shortchange the American dream.

Statement on the Fire at the Department of Commerce

October 1, 1999

I am relieved that today's fire at the Department of Commerce was extinguished quickly and apparently without any serious injuries. The DC Fire Department and all those who worked to put out the fire deserve credit for ensuring the safety of the Department of Commerce em-

ployees who work at the Herbert Hoover Building. I hope that the damage can be repaired quickly and that Secretary Daley and his entire team can be back to full speed as soon as possible.

Statement on Proposed Legislation on Nuclear Waste

October 1, 1999

Yesterday's nuclear accident in Japan is a tragic reminder that we must do everything in our power to ensure safe, responsible handling of radioactive materials. Upon reviewing Senate bill 1287, regarding potential nuclear waste disposal at Yucca Mountain, I have determined that it would not adequately ensure the protection of public health and safety. If this bill is presented to me in its current form, I will veto it.

I am encouraged that this latest Senate bill, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1999," does not seek to authorize interim storage of nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain before a thorough scientific analysis of the site has been completed. That would be an unconscionable mistake, and I have consistently opposed such proposals in the past. However, the bill would take away the existing authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect public

health and safety. It is vital that this authority be preserved.

I urge the Congress to join with me in opposing this legislation and ensuring that we fulfill

our responsibility to protect this and future generations.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Palo Alto, California

October 1, 1999

Thank you. You know, Tom cracked that joke about the White House. *[Laughter]* I'm a Southerner. What I thought sitting here watching him is we have reversed all the roles in "Gone With the Wind." *[Laughter]* We're about to remake the whole movie, and it's going to be better this time. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, first of all, I am delighted to be here. I thank Tom and Jeanne for opening their beautiful home and bringing their beautiful family together, and their larger family, for this event. I thank my dear friend Senator Boxer for being here and for her leadership. I want to thank Governor and Mrs. Romer for being here; and Beth and Ron Dozoretz, and Joe Andrew, for all their work; and Art Torres, the chairman of the California Democratic Party; and I thank Steve Westly and Chris Larsen and everybody else who had anything to do with this event.

There are people here tonight who started with me in 1991 and 1992, and there are people here tonight I've never met before. And that's sort of a metaphor for what's happening to the economy and the society of Silicon Valley and the whole, what I hope is happening to our Democratic Party.

I want to take a few minutes to sort of put all these specific issues that are flying back and forth across the airwaves and over the Internet into some larger context, if I might. Our economy has been strong for so long now a lot of people have forgotten what it was like in 1992, when we had high unemployment, high interest rates; we quadrupled the debt in 12 years of this country. We had had stagnant wages, and the society was beginning to fray rather badly. We had escalating crime rates, escalating welfare rolls, increasing racial tensions. We had a lot of problems.

And we had people who believed that they could get elected by driving deeper wedges into our American society instead of by bringing us together. And when I first came out here—and Larry was one of the first people I met with when I came out—when I first came out here, I knew that a big part of making America work and preparing America for the 21st century would be to model and learn from what was happening here.

You know, this whole technology-based economy here is about 8 or 9 percent of the American economy now directly, but it has accounted for 30 percent of our growth since I've been President. That's a stunning statistic that all of you should know, if you don't. And if you think about how it works, it's the way America ought to work. You know, ideas matter. If you've got good ideas, there are supplies of capital. Teamwork is terribly important. And where you come from and what you did before and who your father was and what your race is or what your gender is or what your sexual orientation is, they don't matter; ideas matter. Can you do something that makes the world a better place, that provides something that other people want that they can hook into? That's very important.

I think—let me just give you one example that I had no earthly idea about until Steve told me tonight. It's a big joke in the White House that when I picked Al Gore to be my Vice President, I was trying to balance the ticket because he was technologically adept and I was technologically challenged. *[Laughter]*

I'll never forget the first time I heard about eBay. I thought it was such a neat deal. I thought, now, that's something I'd like to do; that's my kind of deal. I like to buy and sell and swap and give things and do things. I'd love that. Steve told me tonight there are now 20,000 Americans who do not work for eBay