

said by 81 to 15, you, the American people, thought I shouldn't do it. That was a real tester. [Laughter]

But we did it, because I knew it was the right thing to do. And I figured, a poll is like a horserace; it's not over yet. People pay you to win and to do the right thing for the country, and if it comes out all right, it's all right.

But Al Gore was for that. We went into Bosnia and Kosovo; Al Gore was for that. When we went in to save democracy in Haiti, Al Gore was for that. He broke the tie on the economic plan of '93, where we had no votes from the other party. And if it hadn't been for that economic plan passing, the rest of us—we wouldn't be sitting here in this nice hotel having this lunch today.

So he is a person of extraordinary intelligence, extraordinary energy, and like me, he loves all these issues. He also knows a lot about these technological issues that we're going to have to face. For example, we've got to close the digital divide. Wouldn't you like to have somebody as President who knew how to do it, and who had been working on it for 6 or 7 years?

We've got to deal with the privacy issues. We're all going to have all our records on computers, all our financial records, all our health care records. If you had to put up health care

records to get health insurance, don't you think there ought to be some limit to who gets access to them? Shouldn't you have to give your own permission before you give them up? Do you think you ought to be denied a job because somebody can log on to the Internet and find out something about you your first cousin may not know? These are big issues.

So anyway, I realize this is not a traditional political speech; this is a conversation. But you just remember what I told you. It's a real big election, real big issues, honest differences—not bad guys and good guys, honest differences. And if people know what they are, we'll win. That's what you have to help us do.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in Salon 1 at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon cohosts Fred DuVal and Steve Owens; Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and his wife, Harriet C. Babbitt, Deputy Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development; Janet Napolitano, Arizona attorney general; Thomas Patterson, professor of government and the press, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; and Gov. Jane Dee Hull of Arizona.

## Statement on Proposed School Modernization Legislation *June 22, 2000*

Every year that Congress stalls on passing critical school modernization legislation is another year our children have to go to class in trailers, in crowded classrooms, in crumbling schools. A new U.S. Department of Education survey of the condition of American schools gives cause for concern. Rising enrollments and years of deferred maintenance have taken a serious toll, jeopardizing our children's health and the quality of their education. According to the report, our schools require \$127 billion in repairs and 3.5 million students attend school in buildings that need to be replaced altogether.

Children cannot learn in crumbling schools. It is clear that additional resources are needed to accommodate record enrollments and allow

smaller classes. I have called on Congress to enact my proposal to repair 25,000 schools over the next 5 years. In addition, I have proposed a school construction tax cut that would help communities build and modernize 6,000 schools. Representatives Charles Rangel and Nancy Johnson have introduced legislation to do just that. While there is broad bipartisan support for this key school modernization legislation, congressional leaders have refused to even bring it to a vote. Congress should act now to give all our children the safe, modern, world-class schools they deserve.