

He's by far the best Vice President in the entire history of the United States.

And therefore, he is by far the best qualified person to be President who has run for office in my adult lifetime, because of the way he spent the last 8 years and because I had sense enough to give him a lot to do. *[Laughter]* It's self-serving for me to say, but he has performed magnificently.

And there are three reasons you ought to be for him: Number one, he will keep this prosperity going because he won't change our economic policy; he'll build on it.

Number two, he'll try to include everybody in his vision of America, the people in places left behind, all the families that are working for a living but need help to raise their children, need help with child care or long-term care for their parents or their disabled family members, or after-school programs for their kids. He'll try to do that. And everybody will have a place. We led the fight for the hate crimes victory that we got in the Senate this week, which a lot of you like. We think everybody should be part of our America.

And the final reason you ought to vote for him is, he understands the future, and he can lead us there. He understands the implications of the Internet revolution. He understands that all your medical records and all your financial records are going to be in somebody's computer file somewhere, and your privacy ought to be protected, and they ought not to be invaded unless you give permission to do it. That's an important issue.

He understands that global warming is real. He's the first politician in American life that

said anything to me about climate change, long before it was widely accepted that it was happening.

So what do you need in a President? Somebody with the best experience; somebody that will keep the prosperity going; somebody that cares about all of us; someone that understands the future.

If you want, all of you—so many of you said, “Thank you very much for being a good President. I wish I could do something for you.” You can do something for me: Make sure that everybody you know in this State and across America understands it's a big election; there are real differences; and we want you to know what they are and that we intend to build the future of your dreams. And we need Al Gore. We need these candidates for the Senate and the House.

And if you'll go out and tell people that, and tell people we don't want to badmouth anybody, just let's talk about what our honest disagreements are, we're going to have a big celebration in November. And more important, you young people here are going to have the best days America has ever known.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. in the Fireplace Lounge at the Garden of Eden nightclub. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Maher, host of the television program “Politically Incorrect”; actress Vivica A. Fox, who introduced the President; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; Gov. Gray Davis of California; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Los Angeles, California

*June 23, 2000*

Thank you. Well, first of all, I was very touched by what you said, Kenny, and I thank you and Tracy for having us here in your beautiful home in this little pup tent. *[Laughter]* I'm going to call home tonight, and Hillary is going to say, “Well, what did you do tonight?” And I'm going to say, “Well, I went camping with K-rations.” *[Laughter]*

Anyway, I thank you for doing this, and I thank all of you for coming. And you make Joe Andrew and Terry and Donna and Yolanda and all of us who are going to fight this election out have heart and feel good about it. And we're very proud that people like you are supporting our party. And I thank you for what you said about me.

I guess tonight I would like to make not just kind of a traditional political speech, but I would like to say three or four things. I have been very fortunate in my life. I got to do something I wanted to do for a long time. And when I started, only my mother thought I could win. I never will forget how President Bush, in '92, used to refer to me as the Governor of a small southern State. And I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. [Laughter] And you know what? I still do.

I mean, the thing that makes this country work at its best is that people get a chance to live their dreams. And the thing that makes it improvable is, there are still too many who don't, or there are still people who find folks standing in the way.

When I ran for President in '91 and '92, I did it not because I was dissatisfied being the Governor of a small southern State—I actually was having a heck of a good time. But I really was worried about our country. Our economy was in bad shape, but it was about more than money. We had all these—the social problems were getting worse; they had the riots here in L.A.—you remember that—and the political rhetoric was so divisive.

And the more I listened to it, the more I thought there's something funny about Washington, because where I come from, everybody tried to work through their differences, and in Washington people said, "Well, I've got an idea. You've got an idea. Let's fight." Then I realized that they did it partly because they thought it was the only way they'd ever get on the evening news.

Anyway, we set out on this odyssey to try to change the way the political system works and change America for the better, and it has worked out reasonably well. The country is in better shape than it was 8 years ago. And I'm just very grateful. And I appreciate what Kenny said about hard work and all that, and I believe that. But most people who amount to anything in politics want you to believe that they were born in a log cabin that they built themselves. And I think it's important to recognize that, but for one or two fortunate turns in the road, I could be home doing \$200 divorces and deeds tomorrow, instead of being here doing what I'm doing with you.

The things that makes a democracy work truly great are the kind of shared values that people have, and the fact that ordinary citizens get to

participate, and that over a long period of time—Mr. Martin Luther King said, "The arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice." And if you look at the whole history of America, it basically has been a struggle to live up to what the Founders said we were about, that all of us are created equal, and that we ought to have a chance to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, and that, in order to do that, we have to make this a more perfect Union. And when they said that, only white male property owners could vote, but the smartest ones among them had enough sense to know it was a fraud, and they'd have to do better. And they just set in motion a set of ideas that have carried us all the way to the present day.

Now, what I would like to say to all of you is, you have earned your success. And most of you didn't have much to start with, and it's a real tribute to the power of the mind and the spirit and the openness of America. But you have to ask yourself now—just as you're asking yourself in your personal lives what you're going to do with your success—what is our country going to do with its success?

And I think about it a lot, and I'm not running for anything. This is the first time in over 25 years I haven't been on the ballot. And most days, I'm okay about it. [Laughter] A distinguished world citizen called me last week and said, "You know, Mr. President, for a lame duck, you're still quacking rather loudly." And so I think about it.

And I think anybody in this room tonight over 30 can remember at least one time in your life when you made a mistake not because times were so tough but because times were good and seemed easy and there seemed to be no consequence to the failure to concentrate. That's the thing I'm worried about in this election.

And I hear people talking about the election. I read all these articles like you do. I follow all these polls. And a lot of it's not real substantial yet. People haven't, obviously, kind of come to terms with what this is about. And a lot of you are in a position to influence a lot of other people. And I just want to tell you that there's never been a time like this in my lifetime, where we had so much economic prosperity, so much social progress, so much national self-confidence, so few real crises at home and threats abroad. There are problems, but if you compare this with the last time we had a long economic expansion, for example, it was in the

sixties when we were also dealing with Vietnam and the civil rights struggle. We have never had a period like this.

And I think we ought to give it to our kids. I think we ought to really spend a lot of time this year thinking about how we can build the future of our dreams for our children. And if we think that's what the election is about, then we have to take on the big challenges that are still out there. And I'll just mention three or four of them.

One is, what are we going to do when all these baby boomers like me retire, and there's only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare? What are we going to do when everybody that lives to be 65 has a life expectancy of another 20 or 25 years? It's going to happen here directly. Are they going to be able to work? Are they going to be able to get medicine if they need it? How are they going to be able to make the most of these years?

What are we going to do, now that we have the largest and most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse student population in the history of the country, to give all our kids a world-class education? And I'll tell you this: We know we can do it now.

I was in a public school in Spanish Harlem. Some of you mentioned tonight you saw me on the "Today Show" the other day pushing the VH1 music-in-school program. I was at a school in Spanish Harlem that 2 years ago had 80 percent of the kids reading and doing mathematics below grade level—2 years ago. Today, 74 percent of them are performing at or above grade level—in 2 years. So all children can learn. The public schools can work. But what are we going to do to make that story true everywhere?

What are we going to do to make sure that everybody gets a chance to participate in this economy, to make sure that the people who served our dinner tonight have their chance at their dream, just like we've had our chance at ours?

What are we going to do to help people balance work and childrearing? You'd be amazed how many people I've talked to that make real good incomes that still worry about whether they can do all the stuff they're supposed to do at work and do right by their most important job, raising their kids.

What are we going to do to meet the big environmental challenges of the 21st century? The globe is warming up, folks, and your kids are going to have to live in a very different and much less pleasant world unless we turn this environmental situation around. And it is now possible to do it and still grow the economy, but a lot of people don't believe that.

What are we going to do to continue to stand against hatred and bigotry here at home? There are still people who get killed just because of their race, their religion, or because they're gay in America. That's why I'm glad that hate crimes bill passed the Senate this week. And if you want America to be the force for good around the world, we have to first be good at home.

Now, I think if the election is about that stuff, Al Gore will be elected President, and Hillary and a lot of other Democrats will be elected to the Senate. We'll win our majority back in the House.

Very often an election turns on what people think it's about. And most of you are younger than I am, but I came of age in the 1960's, and I thought the economic prosperity was on automatic. And when I finished high school, I thought the civil rights problems would be solved in the courts and Congress. And I never dreamed that our country would be consumed by Vietnam, but it happened. And the longest economic expansion in history, at that time, vanished a few weeks after Dr. King got killed and Bobby Kennedy got killed and Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection.

I'm not saying this to be a downer. I'm saying this to point out nothing lasts forever, and when we're going through the tough times—Kenny mentioned that—we're going through the tough times, we have to keep reminding ourselves of that. We say, thank God, nothing lasts forever, right? Take a deep breath, get up, put one foot in front of another. But it's also important to remember in the good times.

That's what this election ought to be about: What in the world are we going to do with this prosperity? I worked as hard as I could to turn this country around, to give everybody a chance to be a part of it, to give people the confidence that we can actually do things together, and to beat back all those people that think politics is just about grabbing power and destroying your enemy and doing things that I don't agree with, anyway.

But now we have to decide, okay, we've got the ship of state turned around; we're moving in the right direction; we built our bridge to the 21st century; now, what in the wide world are we going to do about it? That's what this election has to be about.

We Democrats, we can go to the people and say, "Look, we don't have anything bad to say about our opponents as people." I think we should assume they're honorable, and they will do what they say. But what you need to know is that we're really the only—our side is the only side that wants you to know what the differences between the two parties are.

They're making arguments that remind me of the way I felt when I was 18, in 1964, and I thought the economy was on automatic. They're basically saying, "Oh, heck, this thing—nothing—nobody can mess up this economy. So let's just take the biggest tax cut we can and spend all this projected surplus—not actual but projected over the next 10 years—and just do what we want to do."

And here's Al Gore saying, "Hey, I don't think so. I think we should save at least 20 percent of it, what you pay in Medicare taxes, and put it over here in a box so nobody can get at it, and pay the debt down some more and make sure the money is there when all these baby boomers retire so their retirement doesn't bankrupt their kids and their ability to raise their grandkids."

Now, it's not as popular because the other guys are saying, "Here, take your money back." And he's saying, "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow." But that's how we got here. People ask me all the time, they say, "You must be some economic genius. What great new idea did you bring to Washington?" And I say, "Arithmetic." [Laughter] That's what I brought to Washington. I said, "If you're going to spend it, you've got to have it. And if you don't have it, you shouldn't spend it. And don't pretend that two and two makes either six or three"—arithmetic.

Now they're saying, "Oh, man, you couldn't mess this economy up if you tried. Let's just take all that surplus and give it to the voters right now and make everybody fat and happy, and we'll ride off into the sunset." Don't you believe it. You've still got to be thinking about tomorrow.

And the reason that I support Al Gore so strongly—yeah, I feel indebted to him because

he's been good to me, a good Vice President, but I think I know him better than anybody outside his family now. And I want this economic expansion to continue, and I want it to go and reach people and places and neighborhoods that are still left behind. Do you know what the unemployment rate is on the Navajo Reservation at Window Rock in New Mexico? Fifty-eight percent. Do you know what it is at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota? Seventy-three percent. In many places in the Mississippi Delta, where I come from, it's still in double digits.

Al Gore ran our empowerment zone program. We proved we could bring investment and the free enterprise system to poor people. So now we've got a program to bring it everywhere. That's one reason I'm for him. I think he cares about that. We care about that. We want to raise the minimum wage, and they don't. We want to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they don't. We want all the seniors in the country to be able to get affordable prescription drugs, and they don't.

But all these things will tend to be blurred, and I want you to just remember what I'm telling you tonight. This is a chance of a lifetime. This is an important election. There are real differences. And right now, we're the only side that wants you to know what the differences are. Their argument is almost like, "I'll give you a bigger tax cut now. Besides, their fraternity had the ball for 8 years. Why don't you let us have it for a while?" This is a serious deal.

Most of my life has been lived, and my child is now grown. Most of you have little kids, and you're looking at your future. Some of you have grandkids. We ought to be thinking about them. And I'm just telling you, I was 18 years old the last time my country had an economy like this. I have waited for 35 years for us to have this chance. And you've got to make the most of it.

We've got a guy running for President that has done more good for the country as Vice President than anybody ever has. Thomas Jefferson was Vice President. Theodore Roosevelt was Vice President. Harry Truman was Vice President. They were all great Presidents, but they didn't do anything remotely as important as what Al Gore has done as Vice President. He's the best qualified person in my lifetime to run for President. He'll keep the prosperity going. He'll

care about all the people and try to make sure we build one America.

And the last thing I'll tell you is, he understands the future. And we need somebody that really understands the future. Don't you want somebody that understands science and energy and technology and all this information stuff? All your medical records, all your financial records on somebody's computer somewhere—wouldn't you like to have a President that would fight for your right to privacy so nobody could peer into them unless you said yes? Don't you want somebody that understands climate change and can figure out how to deal with it without breaking the economy?

So if somebody asks you why you came, tell them it's because it's real important. Tell them there are real differences. Tell them we're running somebody for President that's the best qualified person in your lifetime, who understands the future and can lead us there and

wants everybody to go together. And tell them we've got to keep this prosperity going.

But mostly, if you have kids, tonight when you go home, look at them, and remember what I told you: I've waited 35 years for this chance. I don't know when it will come again. And we can't pay any attention to the polls or anything else. We've just got to get up and saddle up and fight for their future. And if we do, we win.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to singer Kenneth Edmonds, popularly known as Babyface, and his wife, Tracy, dinner hosts; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; Donna L. Brazile, campaign manager, Gore 2000; and Yolanda Caraway, president, Caraway Group.

## The President's Internet Address *June 24, 2000*

Good morning. Here in America, a revolution in technology is underway. It is more than a time of innovation; it's a time of fundamental transformation, the kind that happens, at most, every 100 years. Today, in my first Saturday webcast, I'd like to speak to you about how we can seize the potential of this information revolution to widen the circle of our democracy and make our Government much more responsive to the needs of our citizens.

Early in our history, people often had only one option when they needed the help of the National Government. They had to visit a Government office and stand in line. Indeed, as Vice President Gore has pointed out, after the Civil War the only way our veterans could collect their pensions was by traveling all the way to Washington, DC, and waiting for a clerk to dig out their war records. Those war records were actually bound in red tape. That gave rise to the universal symbol of bureaucratic delay that has existed down to the present day.

Thankfully, things have gotten a lot easier for citizens over the years. In recent years, advances in computing and information technology have

led to remarkable gains. Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, we have greatly expanded the spread of information technology throughout the Government, cutting reams of redtape, putting vast resources at the fingertips of all of our citizens. Citizens now are using Government websites to file their taxes, compare their Medicare options, apply for student loans, and find good jobs. They're tapping into the latest health research and browsing vast collections in the Library of Congress and following along with NASA's missions in outer space. This is just the beginning.

Today I'm pleased to announce several major steps in our efforts to go forward in creating a high-speed, high-tech, user-friendly Government. First, we're going to give our citizens a single, customer-focused website where they can find every on-line resource offered by the Federal Government.

This new website, FirstGov.gov, will be created at no cost to the Government by a team led by Eric Brewer, who developed one of the most successful Internet search technologies