

coverage because they simply don't receive the price discounts most insurers negotiate.

Seniors and people with disabilities living on fixed incomes simply cannot continue to cope with these kinds of price increases. That's why we must take action to help them, not next year or the year after that but this year. My budget includes a comprehensive plan to modernize Medicare and provide for a long overdue prescription drug benefit for all beneficiaries.

I'm pleased there's growing bipartisan support for tackling this challenge. Earlier this month Republican leaders in the House put forth an outline of a plan that offers as a stated goal access to affordable coverage for all older Americans. Unfortunately, their plan falls short of meeting the goal. It would do virtually nothing for seniors with modest middle class incomes between \$15,000 and \$50,000 a year. Nearly half of all Medicare beneficiaries who lack prescription drug coverage fall into that category.

It's not too late to give all our seniors real prescription drug coverage this year. We can work together on a plan that's affordable, dependable, and available to all older Americans.

So I say to Congress, when you come back to Washington next week, let's get back to work on a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights; let's get back to work on voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefits. The health care of Americans is too important to be sidetracked by partisan politics. The need is urgent, and the time to act is now.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:58 p.m. on April 28 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner

April 29, 2000

The President. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, President Page, President-elect Dillon, distinguished guests. I am really happy to be here, happy to be reunited at long last with the White House Press Corps. [Laughter] If I may, let me direct your attention to a photograph. [Laughter] Taken just moments ago, it proves beyond a doubt that I am indeed happy to be here. [Laughter]

Now, wait a minute. It seems that my hair in that photo—[laughter]—is a little longer than it is tonight. So maybe I am happy to be here, and maybe I'm not. Feel free to speculate. [Laughter] Admittedly, looks and photos can be deceiving. Now look at this photo. It's a recent one of the Vice President applauding one of my policy initiatives. [Laughter] But look a little closer. Those are not his real hands. [Laughter]

Now this photo. [Laughter] It made all the papers, but I have to tell you something. I am almost certain this is not the real Easter Bunny. [Laughter] The next one is my favorite. I really like it. Let's see the next photo. [Laughter] Isn't it grand? [Laughter] I thought it was too good to be true. But there is one thing beyond dis-

pute tonight. This is really me. I am really here. And the record on that count is clear, in good days and bad, in times of great confidence or great controversy, I have actually shown up here for 8 straight years. Looking back, that was probably a mistake. [Laughter] In just 8 years, I've given you enough material for 20 years. [Laughter]

This is a special night for me for a lot of reasons. Jay Leno is here. Now, no matter how mean he is to me, I just love this guy—[laughter]—because, together, together, we give hope to gray-haired, chunky baby boomers everywhere. [Laughter]

Tonight marks the end of an era—the after-dinner party hosted by Vanity Fair. [Laughter] As you may have heard, it's been canceled. Every year, for 8 years, the Vanity Fair party became more and more and more exclusive. So tonight it has arrived at its inevitable conclusion: This year no one made the guest list. [Laughter] Actually, I hear the Bloomberg party will be even harder to get into than the Vanity Fair party was. But I'm not worried; I'm going with Janet Reno. [Laughter]

Now, the Bloomberg party is also a cast party for the stars of “The West Wing,” who are celebrating the end of their first season. You’ll have to forgive me if I’m not as excited as everyone else is at the thought of a “West Wing” finale party. But I’ve got to give them credit; their first season got a lot better ratings than mine did—[laughter]—not to mention the reviews. The critics just hated my travel office episode—[laughter]—and that David Gergen cameo fell completely flat. [Laughter]

Speaking of real-life drama, I’m so glad that Senator McCain is back tonight. I welcome him, especially. As you all know, he just made a difficult journey back to a place where he endured unspeakable abuse at the hands of his oppressors, the Senate Republican caucus. [Laughter]

I am glad to see that Senator McCain and Governor Bush are talking about healing their rift. Actually, they’re thinking about talking about healing their rift. And you know, I would really like to help them. I mean, I’ve got a lot of experience repairing the breach. I’ve worked with Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, I’ve worked with Israelis and Palestinians, with Joe Lockhart and David Westin. [Laughter] But the differences between Bush and McCain may be just too vast. I mean, McCain as Bush’s running mate? Hasn’t the man suffered enough? [Laughter]

George W. Bush has got a brand-spanking-new campaign strategy. He’s moving toward the political center, distancing himself from his own party, stealing ideas from the other party. I’m so glad Dick Morris has finally found work again. [Laughter]

You know, the clock is running down on the Republicans in Congress, too. I feel for them. I do. They’ve only got 7 more months to investigate me. [Laughter] That’s a lot of pressure. So little time, so many unanswered questions. [Laughter] For example, over the last few months I’ve lost 10 pounds. Where did they go? [Laughter] Why haven’t I produced them to the Independent Counsel? How did some of them manage to wind up on Tim Russert? [Laughter]

Now, some of you might think I’ve been busy writing my memoirs. I’m not concerned about my memoirs; I’m concerned about my résumé. Here’s what I’ve got so far. Career objective: To stay President. [Laughter] But being realistic, I would consider an executive position with another country. [Laughter] Of course, I would

prefer to stay within the G–8. [Laughter] I’m working hard on this résumé deal. I’ve been getting a lot of tips on how to write it, mostly from my staff. They really seem to be up on this stuff. [Laughter]

And they tell me I have to use the active voice with a résumé. You know, things like “commanded U.S. Armed Forces”; “ordered air strikes”; “served three terms as President”—everybody embellishes a little—[laughter]—“designed, built, and painted bridge to 21st century”; “supervised Vice President’s invention of the Internet”; “generated, attracted, heightened, and maintained controversy.” [Laughter]

Now, I know lately I haven’t done a very good job at creating controversy, and I’m sorry for that. You all have so much less to report. I guess that’s why you’re covering and commenting on my mood, my quiet, contemplative moments, my feelings during these final months in office. [Laughter]

In that case, you might be interested to know that a film crew has been following me around the White House, documenting my remaining time there. This is a strange time in the life of any administration, but I think this short film will show that I have come to terms with it. Can we see the film?

[At this point, a video was shown.]

The President. You like me. You really like me. [Laughter] Now, you know, I may complain about coming here. But a year from now I’ll have to watch someone else give this speech, and I’ll feel an onset of that rare affliction, unique to former Presidents: AGDD, attention-getting deficit disorder—[laughter]—plus which I’ll really be burned up when Al Gore turns out to be funnier than me. [Laughter]

But let me say to all of you, I have loved these 8 years. You know, I read in the history books how other Presidents say the White House is like a penitentiary, and every motive they have is suspect. Even George Washington complained he was treated like a common thief. And they all say they can’t wait to get away. I don’t know what the heck they’re talking about. [Laughter] I’ve had a wonderful time. It’s been an honor to serve and fun to laugh. I only wish that we’d even laughed more these last 8 years, because power is not the most important thing in life, and it only counts for what you use it.

I thank you for what you do every day, thank you for all the fun times that Hillary and I have had. Keep at it. It's a great country. It deserves our best.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Susan Page, president, and

Arlene Dillon, president-elect, White House Correspondents' Association; "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno; Michael Bloomberg, founder and chief executive officer, Bloomberg News, L.P.; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; David Gergen, editor at large, U.S. News and World Report; David Westin, president, ABC News; Dick Morris, political consultant; and Tim Russert, moderator, "Meet the Press."

Commencement Address at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan *April 30, 2000*

Thank you very much. I must say I was very moved by Secretary Slater's remarks. But I realize he was lifted to new heights of eloquence by being back at his alma mater. And I also realize he was once again proving the adage of Clinton's third law of politics: Whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. *[Laughter]* They will praise you to the skies, true or false. *[Laughter]*

I must say, I was afraid, though, Rodney was about to commit—we have been friends for many years—I've never heard him say anything politically incorrect. I've never heard him utter a curse word. I've never heard him betray a character flaw. But I almost heard an ethnic slur today when he said he got me because I look like President Shelton. *[Laughter]* All gray-haired, middle-aged Scotch-Irish guys look alike, you know. *[Laughter]*

I'm very proud of Secretary Slater, and you should be, too. And I'm proud of General Coburn and his leadership in the Army, and Gene Conti, who is the Assistant Secretary for Policy at our Transportation Department with Secretary Slater. We have been richly blessed by this university. And President Shelton, I am grateful for your years of service here and for our friendship in our early years in Arkansas, when we both had less gray hair and didn't look so much alike.

I thank Mayor Archer and former Governor and Ambassador Blanchard and Representative Kilpatrick and the other Michigan officials who are here with me today. I thank my longtime friend Jim Comer. I didn't know he was here at EMU this year until I saw him right before

I came in. No American has proven so clearly as Professor Comer that all children can learn if given the right learning environment, and I am very grateful to him.

I thank all the distinguished board of regents and faculty and staff who are here. But most of all, I want to recognize the students and their parents of this, your first graduating class of the 21st century.

On the way in, Rodney was telling me that I would identify with a lot of you. A lot of you are first-generation college graduates. A lot of you had to work your way through school. A lot of you needed help in the form of loans and grants and work-study positions. And every one of you should be very proud of what you have achieved.

I also identify with your class because I may be the only President of the United States who ever studied here. I came here to prepare for my debates in 1992. And like you, I passed, and I thank you very much for the contribution you made to my education and to my years here.

You are graduating into a strong economy, the strongest in our Nation's history. You are also graduating into a time of immense possibility, here in Michigan and throughout the United States and, indeed, throughout the world.

One of my speechwriters wrote me a line that said, "Our economy is soaring higher than Swoop, the eagle." *[Laughter]* He said you would know what that means. All I know is that I am grateful for the chance that the Vice President and First Lady and our administration