

if they know where he stands, if they know the honest differences between him and his opponent—this race will be victorious. And I'm convinced that will happen in two dozen other places across America where we have seats in play.

So I want you to think about that. The problem with all these fundraisers is, you're always preaching to the saved. *[Laughter]* But when you leave here, you will, between now and election day, be talking to people all over America, including a lot of people in California.

And it's important that you not just come to these fundraisers; it's important that you take every single opportunity you have between now and November to tell people that. We have the chance of a lifetime. We have great opportuni-

ties. There are real and honest differences. We don't have to have a negative election. We can have a positive election that's an honest debate. But we can't get there by pretending that there aren't differences when there are. On every difference that makes a difference, Adam is on the right side, and we've got to send him to Congress.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at the Frederick Douglass Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Schiff's wife, Eve; and Tom Umberg, committee member, California Delegation to the Democratic National Convention 2000. Adam Schiff was a candidate for California's 27th Congressional District.

Remarks at a Salute to Bruce Vento June 27, 2000

Thank you very much. I've got my "Vento" button and my "Hillary" pin. *[Laughter]* And Bruce says that "Vento" means "win" in Italian, and I think they're both winners, so I like this.

First of all, I want to thank Gerry Sikorski and Vin Weber for cochairing this event. I understand there is a slew of Members of Congress here today, so I won't attempt to call all their names, but I thank them for being here. And I know Bruce's sons are here. And I think Garrison Keillor is coming, and he'll be better than me—*[laughter]*—so that will be worth waiting for.

I also want to recognize our great Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, who is celebrating his birthday tonight with Bruce Vento. Thank you. I like to ride Bruce about his birthday because he's older than I am and looks younger, and I resent it. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank all of you for coming here to pay tribute to Bruce tonight and to support the Bruce Vento Science Educator Scholarship Fund. I think it's quite an appropriate time to be doing this, just a day after we announced the sequencing of the human genome. On the way in, Bruce was saying, "You know, that was a really exciting announcement you had yesterday. Now we've got to find a few more science

teachers to explain to people what it means." *[Laughter]* I thought that was pretty great.

He has been a scientist and an environmentalist since his boyhood in Minnesota. And I reminded him today that one of my most memorable times as President has been the time I spent with him in Minnesota and with a number of others of you here from the Minnesota congressional delegation, as well.

Since 1977, he's been an advocate for science and the environment in the Congress. Some of this will be said later, but I think it's worth—this is astonishing, and maybe even some of you don't know this—he has steered into law more than 300 bills to protect our natural resources. He has led in the preservation of hundreds of thousands of acres of wilderness from Minnesota's boundary waters to Alaska to American Samoa.

That would have been record enough, but the thing I like even more is that Bruce Vento cares about people, especially people without a voice, the homeless. He's also been a leader for health care and education. And if there is anybody who has ever listened to him perform at any of these hearings, he has never stopped being a teacher. Time and time again he's reached out to bridge the gap between researchers and lay people, to help the rest of us

understand both the majesty and the frailty of the natural world we inhabit.

And tonight, as he fights a disease which has not yet yielded all its secrets to science, he's our teacher again. He has certainly shown us a lot about courage, and we're very grateful for it.

Bruce has become a real friend to me over these last 7½ years. He's been an honest and trusted adviser, and he's always said exactly what he thought. And as a consequence, I have also been his student, and I have learned a great deal.

Bruce, Hillary and I admire you. We love you, and we're grateful. You've made me think

this being term-limited is not all bad. But let me say to all of you, I think the best thing I could say about Bruce Vento is the now very famous thing Henry Adams said nearly a century ago: "A teacher affects humanity. You can never tell where his influence stops." Bruce, your influence will never stop.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Washington Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gerald E. Sikorski and John V. (Vin) Weber, salute cohorts; and Garrison Keillor, host of the radio show "Prairie Home Companion."

The President's News Conference *June 28, 2000*

The President. Good afternoon. This has been a good week for the American people: first, the landmark breakthrough in human genomic research, which promises to eradicate once incurable diseases and revolutionize health care for a very long time to come; second, the release of the midsession review, which told us that the health of our economy continues its remarkable expansion.

Our budget surplus this year will be the largest in history, \$211 billion. Over the next 10 years, after we lock away Medicare and Social Security surpluses, the remaining surplus is expected to be almost \$1.5 trillion. This progress exceeds even our own predictions just 4 months ago, another milestone in what is now the longest economic expansion in our history.

This is a tribute to the hard work of the American people and our commitment to fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investments in our people and our future. Now is not the time to abandon the path that has brought us here. We must use this moment of prosperity to make important investments in our most pressing priorities.

Chief among them is the need to provide affordable, reliable prescription drug coverage to our seniors. There is no question that this is a critical need. Just yesterday a study released showed that prescription drugs shot up over 10 percent last year alone. That is too heavy a

burden for our older seniors to pay and for our people with disabilities to pay.

There are some who say we can't provide affordable, accessible prescription drug coverage for all our seniors. I believe that's wrong. With millions of them without coverage, the absence of prescription drug coverage is a fatal flaw in our present health care system. Think about it. Because of breakthroughs like the human genome project, in our lifetime, there may be new life-saving drug treatments for many dreaded diseases. But they won't mean anything if our seniors and people with disabilities can't afford them. That's what this debate is really all about.

Today the House is set to vote on a prescription drug plan that amounts to an empty promise for too many of our seniors. It's a private insurance plan that many seniors and people with disabilities simply won't be able to afford. Insurers, themselves, say the Republican plan won't work. The bottom line is, their plan is designed to benefit the companies who make the prescription drugs, not the older Americans who need to take them. It puts special interest above the public interest.

Let me make it specific and clear. This plan would not guarantee affordable prescription drugs to single senior citizens with incomes above \$12,600 a year or to senior couples with incomes above \$16,600 a year. And we have all heard countless, countless stories of those