

Statement on the Workforce Investment Act *August 11, 2000*

Two years ago this week I signed the bipartisan Workforce Investment Act (WIA), launching an historic initiative that Vice President Gore and I first proposed in 1992 as a way to streamline and bring greater accountability to our Nation's job training system. Today, with these reforms underway in all 50 States, we reach another key milestone by adopting the final rule implementing the major provisions of this landmark act. I congratulate our Federal partners, Congress, the States, local communities, businesses, and American workers on how far we have come.

Largely as a result of WIA's reforms, States now have established 1,200 One-Stop Career Centers to provide job seekers and employers in each community with a single, customer-focused point of entry to a wide range of employment services. Developed with extensive input from the many people with a stake in our job training system, the final rule provides additional direction to State and local partners while pre-

serving their planning and operating flexibility. The rule also gives State and local partners guidance on creating individual training accounts that allow workers to choose the training that meets their needs.

Unfortunately, currently proposed congressional funding for workforce development programs, including the administration's Fathers Work/Families Win initiative, falls far short of the amount needed both by American businesses to meet the growing demand for skilled workers and by working families to gain access to lifelong learning. WIA provides broad access to employment opportunities, often for people with disabilities or others who have been excluded, and it should be properly funded. I call on Congress to fully fund the bipartisan program it passed 2 years ago so that all Americans can participate in today's era of economic opportunity. With WIA up and running across the country, now is the time to invest in the system we built together.

Statement on Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency *August 11, 2000*

Today I am issuing an Executive order to help people with limited English proficiency (LEP) access Federal services. Many people who are eligible for Federal services cannot effectively use those services because they are not proficient in English. The Executive order directs Federal agencies to improve the language-accessibility of their programs by December 11, 2000. This initiative complements our commitment to promoting programs to help individuals learn English.

I am concerned that language barriers are preventing the Federal Government and recipients of Federal financial assistance from effectively serving a large number of people in this country who are eligible to participate in their programs. Failure to systematically confront language barriers can lead to unequal access to Federal benefits based on national origin and

can harm the mission of Federal agencies. Breaking down these barriers will allow individuals with limited English proficiency to more fully participate in American society.

This Executive order directs Federal agencies to break down language barriers by implementing consistent standards of language assistance across agencies and among all recipients of Federal financial assistance. Under this flexible standard, agencies and recipients must take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities, taking into account a variety of considerations. Among the factors to be considered are the number or proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service population, the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program, the nature and importance of the service provided by the program, and the available resources.

NOTE: The Executive order of August 11 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Xavier Becerra in Los Angeles, California

August 11, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Let me say, first, how delighted I am to be here with Xavier and Carolina. Thank you, Fermin Cuza, for being here and standing up for him. I thank my good friend Luis Gutierrez from Chicago for bringing his family here today. We were laughing—when I was running for President in early 1992, he was out there running with me. We were standing by the entrance to the El in Chicago early one morning, shaking hands, when only my mother thought I could be elected President. [Laughter] And 8 years later, it's worked out pretty well.

I want to thank Tom Umberg for the distinguished work he did in the Clinton-Gore administration, and I thank you for being here. And Councilman Pacheco, thank you. And Mike Feuer, who's gone, I have to mention him because he's one of the guys that voted to have the city make a contribution to our convention so we could be here today. [Laughter] And I want to thank him.

Let me say, I was profoundly honored to present Cruz Reynoso with the Medal of Freedom, and I thank you for coming here, sir, and for all you have done for civil rights and human rights over all these years.

I'm delighted to have the chance to start my stay at the Democratic Convention with all of you for Xavier Becerra. I am going on to a dinner for the host committee of the convention, to make sure we've nailed down every detail of what we're supposed to be doing here and what we have to do. And I'll have a chance over the next couple of days, over the weekend, to go around and meet with most of the various caucuses of our party and many of the State delegations, and then have a lot of them come to me, to say the most important message I have to say to the Democrats, which is, thank you. Thank you for me and for Hillary and for Chelsea and our family and friends and our administration, for giving me the chance to run

in '92, for sticking with me in '96, and for supporting a new direction for America.

Xavier talked about some of the results. I have tried to be a builder. In the first campaign, our slogan was "Putting People First," and our theme song was, "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow." In the second campaign, our slogan was "Building a Bridge to the 21st Century." And we built our bridge to the 21st century, but we still can't stop thinking about tomorrow.

And that's why I'm here tonight. I admire your Congressman and, obviously, for so many of you, your friend. Nothing I have achieved in the last 8 years would have been possible if it had just been me out there talking. I had a great team in the White House, led by the Vice President, and an unbelievable group of people in Congress who, in the majority, and later in the minority, stood strong for the things that we together believed would build America and stood against those things we thought would divide America or tear America down.

And so the simple message I have is, we've got to keep this progress going. We have to keep changing but changing in the right direction. We have a chance, because of all this prosperity and social progress, to build the future of our dreams for our children. We have a chance to make sure that not only the people who can afford to come to a fundraiser but the people who work for a minimum wage can all send their kids to college and have a chance to live the American dream.

So I have said all over America, I'll say again, you need to know the following things about this election. It is a huge election. It is maybe the only time in your lifetime you will be voting for President, Vice President, and Congress and Senate, with literally the chance to build the future of your dreams for your children in your hands, where there is so much economic prosperity and social progress, the absence of domestic threat or foreign threat, a great deal of