

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

national self-confidence and great good feeling, which our friends in the other party tried to tap into in Philadelphia—[laughter]—but they wanted you to believe it all happened by accident, you remember? [Laughter]

My old daddy used to say, “If you find a turtle on a fencepost, chances are it didn’t get there by accident.” [Laughter] You know, I remember when they were in office and in charge of economic policy for 12 years, they took credit if the Sun came up in the morning. [Laughter] Now they want you to believe it all just happened by accident. “I have no idea where all these jobs came from.” [Laughter]

Well, what I want to say to you is, I think we ought to have a great, happy, positive election about the differences in our ideas. I don’t believe we ought to even allude to the fact that we think there is something wrong with them as people. We’ve had enough of that the last 20 years to last this country for the rest of its existence. We’ve had enough of the politics of personal destruction and division, but we’ll never get enough of the politics of honest debate and difference. That’s how we grow. That’s how we learn.

Nobody’s got a monopoly on the truth, and we ought to say we’re going to assume in this election that they’re all honorable men and women, from the candidates for President and Vice President to the Senate candidates to the House candidates. We’re going to assume they love their families, and they love their country, and they will do what they think is right. But we do believe they ought to tell the American people what they intend to do because, while this is a very important election and there are profound differences, I get the feeling most days that only the Democrats want the people to know what the differences are. And we see in some campaigns across America where they’re complaining that we’re running negative campaigns if we tell the voters how they vote and what they said. It’s almost as if they have a right to conceal their record and their positions and what they intend to do.

So all I want to say is, I posit that they’re good people, and I think we ought to forget about the recriminations against the kind of politics that so many of them have put us through for a long time. I don’t believe in negative campaigns. But I think we ought to have a debate here, because there are differences. Let me just give you a few examples.

If Xavier Becerra and Luis Gutierrez were in the majority rather than in the minority in Congress and if Tom Daschle were the Senate majority leader instead of the minority leader, along with Speaker Gephardt, this year we would have already signed into law the Patients’ Bill of Rights, the minimum wage, equal pay strengthening for women, hate crimes legislation, sensible gun safety legislation that mandates child trigger locks, closed the gun show loophole, stopped the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, hate crimes legislation—I don’t know if I said that or not—and school construction legislation to help places like Los Angeles which are being overrun by more and more school kids and where we need new buildings built, old buildings fundamentally adapted, and repairs done.

Now, those are just some of the things that I have proposed that our side is for that they’re not. So there are consequences to this election. It matters who’s in the House. It matters who’s in the Senate. And I am doing what I can to help our side in the House and the Senate.

I’ll give you another example. Every single year since our party has been in the minority, every year I have to fight against attempts to weaken the environmental laws of the United States. And every year, because enough of the Democrats stay with me, we say no.

So now you’ve got cleaner air, cleaner water; literally 43 million more Americans breathing air up to Federal standards than before we took office; cleaner water, 450,000 fewer instances of sickness a year because of polluted water; set aside more land than any administration except the two Roosevelts in the continental United States. We closed 3 times as many toxic waste dumps in 8 years as they did in 12—3 times as many. And the economy got better, not worse. But every year we still had to fight efforts to roll back these environmental standards. So you have a choice. All I’m saying is, it really matters who gets elected to the House and who gets elected to the Senate. And, of course, the Senate also has to confirm the appointments of the President, including the appointments to the Supreme Court.

Now, you may have noticed that I have a particular interest in one U.S. Senate race. [Laughter] California has two women Senators; I think New York should have at least one. And I hope you will help.

Then we come to the Presidency and the Vice Presidency. This is the week that Al Gore and Joe Lieberman get to make their case to the American people the way their counterparts did in Philadelphia. And I'll make you a prediction—and I haven't seen either one of their remarks—I'll bet you they'll be far more specific about what they're for, because we don't have to hide what we're for. And I'll bet you Al Gore will say the same thing in the general election he said in the primary, because he doesn't want anybody to develop amnesia about what he said in the primary. *[Laughter]*

And all I want us to do is to actually flesh all this out and let everybody say they have differences. They have differences on education, on health care, on the environment, on what it takes to build one America, including equal pay, the minimum wage, hate crimes, employment nondiscrimination, and a woman's right to choose. They have differences. So let's just set them out there and let the people decide.

They have differences on crime policy. Were we right or wrong to put 100,000 police on the street? Are we right to try to put 50,000 more in the highest crime areas? Were we right or wrong to do the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban? And should we close the gun show loophole? And should we require child trigger locks? And should we ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips?

The Vice President thinks, in a gutsy move, and I agree with him, that we ought to say to people that buy handguns they ought to have a photo ID license like people that get cars that shows they know how to use it safely and they passed a background check. Now, who's right and who's wrong?

We trust the American people with our positions, those that are popular and those that aren't, those that rile certain powerful interest groups and those that don't. And the most important thing—I'll just say a little something about this in detail—there is a profound, yawning difference on economic policy and tax policy.

Now, I think that I've earned a right to talk a little bit about economic policy. And Al Gore has earned the right to be heard about economic policy because he cast the tie-breaking vote for the '93 economic plan that got interest rates down and business investment up and started this whole economy on this wild ride we've been on the last 8 years.

And so what I want to say to you is this: They say, now we've got a huge surplus. In Philadelphia—I got tickled listening to them—they have no idea where it came from. It just happened. *[Laughter]* It must have happened in spite of President Clinton, since he never did anything right. *[Laughter]* And he and Al Gore, they just rocked along for the ride, and the Democrats, they never did anything about it.

Back in '94, before they knew it would work, they didn't mind laying our House Members out on the cold slab of political defeat because they voted for it. They thought it was our responsibility in 1994, before the American people could see that it was going to work.

So now they say, "Okay, they got rid of the deficit, and we've got a little surplus, and so what, they paid \$400 billion off of the debt." *[Laughter]* "Who cares? It's just one of those things. But what we should do now," they say, "is, since we're going to have this big projected surplus over the next 10 years, enough to get us out of debt for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President"—and I want you all to follow this kind of close, because there's a reason why I'm telling you all of this. I know I'm preaching to the saved here. *[Laughter]* But all of you have friends who aren't as active in politics as you. All of you have friends who may not think this is such a big election. Every one of you has friends who don't understand what the differences are between the two candidates for President and Vice President, and the candidates for the Senate and the House—every one of you.

And it's not good enough for you to come here and give this man a contribution. He's already been chairman of the Hispanic caucus in Congress. He's already been recognized as a leader. But he needs a little wind at his back here. He needs to have all the things he's fought for validated. And that requires that you go out from this city and this convention and talk to everybody you know and say, "You've got to vote. Here's what the differences are. I want you to think about it."

So let me finish. What they say—it sounds so good. They say, "Okay, this surplus has materialized. We don't know where it came from." *[Laughter]* "We're quite sure that President Clinton and Vice President Gore had absolutely nothing to do with it. It just sort of appeared. And it's your money, and we're going to give

it back to you.” And it sounds good, right? “It is your money.” And so they say, “We’re going to give it back to you. We’re going to have”—“going” is the operative word—[laughter]—“over the next 10 years \$2.2 trillion. That’s a whole bunch of money, and it will be good for you if we give it back to you, and it’s yours, anyway.”

And we say, “But, wait a minute. We have to hold back enough money to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare so the baby boom generation can retire without bankrupting their children. We ought to add a prescription drug benefit that all seniors can afford. We have the largest and most diverse student population in our history; we’re going to have to invest more in education, with all these teachers retiring. And besides that, something might come up.” [Laughter] Either the money might not come in or an emergency might happen, like we’ve had 3 years of farm emergencies where we’ve taken the tax dollars people in the city of Los Angeles paid and given them to farmers all across America because we have an interest in preserving family farms and because agricultural income has been so distressed. Just like they gave their money to you when you had your earthquake and your other natural disasters. Something might come up. In California, you know that. Things come up—earthquakes, fires. [Laughter] I mean, I’ve been through everything but a plague of locusts with you folks. [Laughter] So we say something might come up.

And then we say, “We’re for a tax cut.” But we’re honest. Ours costs way less than half theirs, and it’s focused on what families really need—tax cuts for long-term care for their elderly or ill, disabled family members, tax cuts for the cost of college tuition, for the cost of child care, for retirement savings, for alleviating the marriage penalty. And even though ours costs way less than half theirs, about three-quarters of the American people would be better off under ours. They get more benefits.

Plus, ours allows you to still get us out of debt by 2012, which the Council of Economic Advisers said 2 weeks ago would keep interest rates a percent lower for a year, for 10 years—a percent a year lower for 10 years. Do you know what’s that worth to you? It’s worth about \$850 a year in lower home mortgages to the average family and lower car payments, lower college loan payments, lower interest rates for

business loans so businesses can expand more, hire more people, and earn more money.

In other words, almost all the Americans—at least four out of five Americans would lose more in higher interest rates under their plan than they would get in tax cuts.

But the main thing is, I want to tell you—so it’s bad economics. And the Chairman of the Federal Reserve said over and over and over again, in this strong economy, if you have a huge tax cut, he’ll raise interest rates to keep inflation down. But the real big deal is, it is a projected surplus.

Now, you have a—I bet you in your mind, particularly if you’ve got to think about raising kids and sending them to college, you probably have a projected income. [Laughter] And what is your projected income for the next 10 years, anyway? Just think about it. You have a projected income. Now, if I ask you right now to sign a contract to give it all away today, your projected income for the next 10 years, on something you really wanted, would you do it? No new money for education or health care or rainy days or emergencies because you really want this thing I’m going to give you. All you got to do is give away all your income for 10 years. Would you do it?

*Audience members.* No-o-o!

*The President.* If you would, you should really give serious consideration to supporting them in this election this year—[laughter]—because that’s what they want to do. But it sounds so good. See, they say, “It’s your money, and I’m going to give it back to you.” I’m going to tell you something. We may never again be in this situation. We may never again be in this situation.

I remember the last time we had the longest economic expansion in history. You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969. I remember when the American people thought the economy was on automatic and no one could mess it up—in the mid-sixties. I remember when the American people thought that all the big social problems of America then related to race and poverty, would be handled in the Congress and the courts and would never go to the streets in the mid-sixties, and that we would all—we would just keep up feeling good, and everything would be rocking along, and so we didn’t really have to concentrate.

Then we had the riots in Watts. Then Martin Luther King got killed. Then Bobby Kennedy

got killed here in Los Angeles. Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection because the country was so divided over Vietnam. The country took a different course in the '68 election. Pretty soon the longest economic expansion in history was over. And I'll tell you something. I'm not as young as I once was, and I certainly have aides in the White House, but I have not lost my memory. [Laughter] I have waited—I'm not telling you this as your President; I'm telling you this as your friend. Los Angeles and this State have been wonderful to me and to my family and to my administration. I have waited 35 years, since the mid-sixties, for my country once again to be in a position where people with the values and skills and concerns that this man has could build the future of our dreams for our children.

You know, you will never find—and I want to say this about Al Gore and Joe Lieberman. I've known Joe Lieberman for 30 years. He helped me develop a lot of the ideas that I brought to the '92 campaign that we implemented. And he deserves your support. In every way, you will be more than pleased.

And I have worked closer with Al Gore than any other living human being outside of his family. He supported all the tough decisions I made, including the ones that were unpopular. I'll never forget the day he and I decided we had to give economic aid to Mexico because we couldn't let them go downhill and it would lead to a flood of immigration that was illegal. It would lead to all kinds of tensions on the border. It would make them even more vulnerable to narcotraffickers. It would cause the instability in the whole economy of Latin America. But there was a poll that day that said, by 81 to 15, the American people did not want us to help Mexico; it was a bad investment. We did it, and he was for it, and they paid the loan back ahead of schedule. It was the right thing to do, but it wasn't popular.

I remember—I remember when I had to decide whether to stand up against ethnic cleansing and slaughter in Bosnia and Kosovo, and it wasn't popular. But he supported me. He said, "You have to do it. It's the right thing to do. I'll back you."

I remember when we presented this economic plan in 1993, and everybody knew how hard it was politically. The deficit had gone up to \$290 billion. We were hooked on it. We were hooked on deficit spending. We quad-

rupled the debt in the 12 years before I showed up. We were hooked on it.

You know, when you get in a deep, deep hole and you want to climb out, there isn't any easy way. You're going to have to break your fingernails trying to get up that wall. There was no easy way. And he said, "Do it. We have to pay the consequences."

This is a guy that I know will do what he thinks is right. He will look to the long-term interests of the country, and he has the right economic program to keep the prosperity going and to extend its benefits to the people that are still left behind. This is a man who understands the future, the future of information technology, the future of the human genome, the challenge of climate change, the need to stay ahead in science and technology. All these things are important.

He understands that we're going to get a little gene card that tells all of our babies what their future is going to be. But we don't want anybody to be able to get ahold of that and deny our children health insurance or a job. He understands that we get a lot more efficient now because of the Internet and all of our financial and medical records are on it, but we don't want anybody to have them unless we say okay.

I think we need somebody in the White House who has spent a lifetime thinking about the future from the point of view of ordinary people who need someone to stand up for them.

And the last thing I want to say is the most important of all. It applies to Xavier, Congressman Gutierrez, everything I've tried to do as President, and profoundly it applies to Al Gore, who shares with me a history of growing up in the segregated South and a lifetime of commitment to civil rights.

The most important thing of all is not what is in our minds; it is what is in our hearts. The most important thing of all is that we believe that everybody counts, that we believe everybody deserves a chance, that we think we all do better when we help each other. We believe that it's not enough to say that you care; you have to act as if you care.

The reason I want Al Gore and Joe Lieberman to win this election is I know they'll keep the prosperity going. I know they'll keep us moving into the future, but most important of all, they'll make sure we all go along for the ride.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. in the Santa Monica Room at the Westin Century Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Becerra's wife, Carolina Reyes; Fermin Cuza, senior vice president of international trade, Mattel, Inc.; Tom Umberg, former Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy; Los Angeles

councilmen Nick Pacheco and Michael Feuer; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas and Vice Presidential candidate Dick Cheney. Representative Becerra was a candidate for reelection in California's 30th Congressional District.

## The President's Radio Address

*August 12, 2000*

Good morning. These are good times for America, with the strongest economy we've ever had. And all across our country, Americans of every age and background are working together to strengthen the fabric of our communities.

Today I want to talk about some remarkable progress our society has made in the last 8 years: Crime is at a 25-year low; the welfare rolls, the smallest in 30 years; and a new report from the Centers for Disease Control shows that teen birth rates have fallen for the eighth year in a row, and now we have the lowest teen birth rate in 60 years. This is a remarkable achievement.

Consider this. If the teen birth rate had stayed at the same as its peak in 1991, teen mothers would have given birth to another 120,000 babies this year. That drop is wonderful news and further proof that together we can make real progress on social problems people once said were beyond our reach. This is a tribute to community and religious groups, to teachers and families, and of course, to our teenagers themselves.

From the start of our administration, we've endeavored to restore the sense that responsibility and opportunity are the foundations of a strong American community. Five years ago we called upon parents and community leaders to launch a national campaign to prevent teen pregnancy. The next year we worked across party lines to enact landmark welfare reform, which requires unmarried minor parents to stay in school and live under adult supervision. We also demanded that fathers live up to their obligations and have doubled child support collections. We've increased counseling, promoted abstinence, and paired children with mentors, doc-

umenting our achievements in a report to Congress this week.

Despite this progress, we know that too many of America's children still are having children. As friends and neighbors, we need to reach out and help these young people learn and grow.

Today I'm taking action to promote one innovative approach we all know will work. It's called, second chance homes, an idea that Vice President Gore and I have long supported and which was championed early on by Senators Moynihan, Kent Conrad, and Joe Lieberman.

These homes provide teenage moms and their babies with an environment that is safe, supportive, and supervised. The teens get the help they need to finish school. They learn how to care for their children and manage a budget. Some homes also work with teen fathers.

Experts say mothers in these homes are less likely to have another baby or go on welfare and more likely to get an education and find a job. I read of one young Massachusetts woman who got pregnant at 14 and soon was estranged from her family with no place to live. With the help of a second-chance home, she got back on her feet, trained at a community college, and has left welfare to become a proud working mother.

Second-chance homes are a good idea that enjoy bipartisan support. I've asked Congress already to provide \$25 million to start more of them across the country. Now let's take bipartisan action to give mothers and babies hope for a better future.

But many families shouldn't have to wait for Congress to act. That's why today I'm directing the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development to work together to help more communities across America open second-chance homes.