

In 1947 President Truman was the first President ever to address the NAACP. His biographer, David McCullough, called it the strongest statement on civil rights heard in Washington since the time of Lincoln. President Truman said, "I meant every word, and I'm going to prove it." And so he did, desegregating the Armed Forces and the Federal civil service and continuing to fight for civil rights gains.

He also envisioned a new system of health care for the elderly and affordable health insurance for all Americans. He led America on the first leg of a long march that would end in 1965, with the creation of Medicare. He endured vicious attacks, and his party lost the Congress in a record way, in no small measure because he simply thought that people, when they needed a doctor, ought to be able to get one.

But at the signing ceremony for Medicare several years later, the guest of honor was Harry Truman. President Johnson gave him the very first Medicare card and said, "It was really Harry Truman who planted the seeds of compassion and duty which have today flowered into care for the sick and serenity for the fearful."

So at home and around the world, if we truly wish to honor President Truman, we will do in our day what he did so brilliantly in his: see clearly the long-term path we must follow, take the first steps without hesitation.

This is a kind of time Harry Truman must have dreamed of at the end of World War II, at the dawn of the cold war, in the bitterest, bleakest days of the conflict in Korea: an America at peace, with prosperity, social progress, no crippling internal crisis or external threat.

Like our victory in World War II, this opens a whole new era for us. It gives us great opportunities, enormous challenges, profound responsibilities. At home, we have the chance and the

duty to meet the challenge of the aging of America; of the largest and most diverse group of schoolchildren in our Nation's history; of families struggling to balance the obligation to work with the more important obligation to raise their children well; to explore the far frontiers of science and technology in a way that benefits ordinary Americans and protects our most cherished values; to get this country out of debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

Around the world, we have to face the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, narcotrafficking, the persistent, enduring ethnic, religious, tribal, and racial conflicts that grip so many places in the world, and new and different threats that could profoundly affect us all, including global warming and the rise of AIDS and other infectious diseases, along with the breakdown of public health systems around the world.

But we're well-positioned to deal with this, thanks in no small measure to what Harry Truman and his generation did so long ago. He gave us the opportunities we have today. It's a good thing that we say, thanks, Mr. President, by naming this building for him. It would be a far, far better thing if we would follow his lead and give the same set of opportunities to our grandchildren. I pray God that we will.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:33 p.m. outside the Harry S. Truman Building. In his remarks, he referred to President Truman's grandnephew, John Ross Truman, and daughter, Margaret Truman Daniel; George M. Elsey, former administrative assistant to President Truman; and actor James Earl Jones, master of ceremonies.

The President's Internet Address

September 22, 2000

Good afternoon. We Americans are truly fortunate to be living at such an exciting time. Computers and the Internet are revolutionizing the way we work, live, relate to each other and the rest of the world. They also have the potential to fundamentally transform and improve the

way Government serves the American people. Today I want to talk about a major step we're taking toward that goal.

When I became President, there were only 50 websites on the entire World Wide Web. Today, there are almost 20 million. Under the

leadership of Vice President Gore, we've made great progress bringing Government into the digital age. Instead of waiting in line, citizens can go on-line to file their taxes, compare their Medicare options, and find good jobs. They can tap into the latest health research, change their address at the post office, and follow along with NASA's missions in outer space. And they can do it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

But with 27 million web pages of Government information now on-line and more added every day, finding the information or service you need can be frustrating. That's why I'm pleased to announce that today we're launching a new, one-stop website for Federal on-line information: firstgov.gov. It allows you, for the first time, to link to the Federal Information Service, or service you are looking for, without having to know the name of the agency or the program that offers it.

So, go to www.firstgov.gov, and you're just a few mouse clicks away from websites where you can apply for student loans or reserve a campground in a national park.

Now, when I first announced in June we would be creating firstgov.gov, I promised we would do so in 90 days. That was exactly 90 days ago. I am very proud of the Federal em-

ployees who made this happen in Internet time. And I'm thankful to Dr. Eric Brewer of Inktomi. He's the entrepreneur who, with the help of Federal grants, created one of the private sector's most successful search engine technologies. Out of gratitude and patriotism, he developed and donated the search engine for firstgov.gov.

Now this website belongs to the American people. We've included a place for you to suggest improvements, and we're going to keep working on this site and on all of our Government websites. Firstgov symbolizes, I think, the kind of Government we need in the 21st century, one that empowers citizens to make the most of their own lives.

At the dawn of our Republic, Thomas Jefferson said, "America's institutions must move forward hand in hand with the progress of the human mind." Well, today, as the progress of the human mind races ahead, it's vital that we make sure our democratic institutions keep pace. And if we do, we can create a more perfect, more responsive democracy for the information age.

Thanks for logging on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. from the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Statement on Signing the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000

September 22, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 2869, the "Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000," which will provide important protections for religious exercise in America. This Act will, in certain cases, forbid State and local governments from imposing a substantial burden on the exercise of religion unless they could demonstrate that imposition of such a burden is the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling governmental interest. The Act would protect the exercise of religion in two situations: (1) where State and local governments seek to impose or implement a zoning or landmark law in a manner that imposes a substantial burden on religious exercise and (2) where State and local governments seek to impose a substantial burden on the religious exer-

cise of persons residing or confined to certain institutions.

I applaud the Congress, particularly Senators Kennedy, Hatch, Reid, and Schumer, and Representatives Canady and Nadler for their hard work in passing this legislation. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act will provide protection for one of our country's greatest liberties—the exercise of religion—while carefully preserving the civil rights of all Americans. Just as I fully supported the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993, I support Senator Kennedy's and Hatch's bill. Religious liberty is a constitutional value of the highest order, and the Framers of the Constitution