

have caused through decades of deceptive marketing, especially to youth.

With a clear ruling last week by a U.S. District Court allowing the case to proceed to trial, the Attorney General today reaffirmed her intention to hold tobacco companies accountable for their actions. Tobacco companies have saddled generations of Americans with unnecessary health costs and premature death by fraudulently marketing their products to youth and deceiving the American public about the dan-

gers of tobacco use. More than 400,000 Americans die each year from smoking-related diseases, and 80 percent of them started smoking as children. Today I renew my call to Congress to reject special protections for big tobacco and provide the funds necessary to allow this case to be decided in the courtroom, not the back room. Together with our partners in the States, we can and must make the health of our children a priority. The American people deserve their day in court.

## Statement on Proposed Hate Crimes Legislation

October 5, 2000

Today the Republican leadership made a serious mistake by stripping the hate crimes legislation from the Department of Defense Authorization bill, despite strong bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. The Republican leaders have turned their backs on legislation designed to send the message that all persons should be treated the same under the law—no matter what their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

This legislation would enhance the Federal Government's ability to prosecute violent crimes motivated by race, color, religion, or national origin and would authorize Federal prosecution of crimes motivated by sexual orientation, gen-

der, or disability. This legislation also recognizes that State and local law enforcement still have primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes.

It has been over 2 years since the brutal dragging death of James Byrd, Jr., and about 2 years since the heinous death of young Matthew Shepard. We owe their families—and all the families of hate crimes victims across this country—no less than to pass this legislation this year. Working with the bipartisan coalition that supports hate crimes legislation, I will continue to fight the Republican leadership in Congress to make sure this important work gets done this year.

## Remarks at a National Leadership PAC Reception in New York City

October 5, 2000

*The President.* Thank you for the standing ovation. [Laughter] Thank you for being here to—

*Audience member.* New York loves you!

*The President.* You guys calm down. This is a rowdy crowd here. Look, I'm not as young as I used to be. I don't know if I can quiet this crowd. I'm tired. Go easy on me tonight. It's almost the end of the week. [Laughter]

I want to thank Charles Rangel for giving me a chance to be here tonight with Alma and Alicia. I want to thank the other Members of Congress who are here. I've got them some-

where. [Laughter] Congressmen Crowley, Nadler, and Lowey of New York are all here. Thank you for being here. I want to thank the New York Democratic Chair; Judith Hope is here. I want to thank Jane Rosenthal for being our host and for gathering up all of you tonight.

I have a lot of friends here. I want to say a special word of appreciation to one person who is or just was in the audience, Chevy Chase, who was with me when I was nominated for President, when I won the California primary in June of '92. And I was running third in the polls, and no one wanted to come to my victory