

that brave, good, fine young man is standing here.

Now, I hope to goodness not a single living soul in this audience has ever gone through anything like this. But I promise you, in some way or another, for every single one of you, what you do as citizens affects how you live as people. I tell people all the time, politics is not the most important thing in life, not even in my life. Being President is the second most important job I ever had next to being a father. When they get ready to lay you down, you don't think about all the time you should have spent at the office; you think about who liked you, who loved you, how the flowers smelled in the springtime, what it was like to be a child. But politics is supposed to create the conditions and give people the tools to shape their dreams, not tear their hearts out.

When it's all said and done, that's what it's about. In my lifetime we have never had this chance before like we have it now. I'm not running for anything, for the first time in 26 years. I tell you this as a citizen: Make sure Susan wins; make sure Jon wins; make sure Joe and Al win. Give this country its best chance.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. in the paddock area of the racetrack at Garden State Park. In his remarks, he referred to Cherry Hill High School East senior Alexis Ettinger, who introduced the President; Jon S. Corzine, candidate for U.S. Senate in New Jersey; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. Mayor Susan Bass Levin of Cherry Hill was a candidate for New Jersey's Third Congressional District.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President-Elect Vicente Fox of Mexico and an Exchange With Reporters

August 24, 2000

President Clinton. Let me just say very briefly what a great honor it is for me, personally, and for the United States, to have the President-elect of Mexico here. I have looked forward to this very much, for the chance to congratulate him on his election, and all the people of Mexico on a truly historic affirmation of genuine democracy in their country. I'm glad he's here, and I'm looking forward to getting to know him, hearing his ideas, and doing what I can to help him get off to a strong start in our partnership.

President-elect Fox. Well, the same here. I'm very glad to be here, sharing a few minutes with President Clinton, the opportunity to know each other, the opportunity to tell him about this great day, July the 2d in Mexico, and the opportunity to get to know experiences that you have lived in this 8 years in this excellent and growing relationship between Mexico and the United States, and also to thank you for all the support you gave to Mexico in difficult times.

When we were in crisis, we also got and saw the hand of a friend. And so that's something that we recognize in Mexico and I personally

recognize and thank you for in the name of all Mexicans.

Mexican Democracy

Q. Is Mexico considered a democracy example to *America Latina*?

President Clinton. Considered an example?

Q. Yes, to *America Latina*?

President Clinton. I think that what happened in Mexico is very impressive. I mean, we had a genuine, competitive, democratic election. And I think it's an example to people who are friends of freedom everywhere in the world.

Immigration Policy

Q. President Clinton, excuse me—President-elect Fox has brought up a whole bunch of new ideas on the relationship between Mexico and the United States, including plans concerning the border immigration. Are you going to discuss these in full length?

President Clinton. Well, I certainly hope so. I want to hear them. Obviously, we have borders, and we have laws that apply to them, and we have to apply them, and so do the

Mexicans. But I think over the long run, our countries will become more interdependent.

If you just look at what's happened in the relationship between the United States and Mexico since NAFTA, President-elect Fox had mentioned—made a reference to the assistance the United States gave to Mexico when they had a serious financial crisis. But I always like to remind the American people that our Mexican neighbors paid their loan back ahead of time and in the best possible way. They were good neighbors. We did the right thing. And everything that has happened there has validated the commitment of every genuine friend of an equal partnership in our country.

I think over time, you will see growing interdependence in our hemisphere. And I think the Canadians will be a part of that, and I very much hope our friends in Central America and South America and the Caribbean will be part of that. It will be the way of the world. And we will all have to deal with the enemies of organized society and the nation-state together, as well as taking advantage of all these opportunities. I regret that I won't be around for a lot of it. But I think it's a good thing.

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—*an idea to increase the number of legal visas for Mexico, up to a quarter of a million visas, in exchange for more cooperation and enforcement on the Mexican side to

stop illegal immigration from coming to the U.S. How do you see that? Is that doable?

President Clinton. Well, I want to talk to him about it. I think if you look at the United States, I believe we have the most generous immigration policy in the world. And as you know, I've been a very strong supporter of that. We were just talking on the way out about the various kinds of people that are in our administration and where they're from, and America has been made a better country because of that. But I want to talk about the details. Look, we just met. We have to go talk.

Do you want to say anything to him?

Q. Did you talk about border issues with Vice President Gore, and what did he say, Vice President Gore?

President-elect Fox. I will have a press conference later for that meeting.

[*At this point, a question was asked and answered in Spanish, and no translation was provided.*]

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Action To Support Firefighters Combating Wildfires August 25, 2000

The wildfire season this year is one of the worst our Nation has ever witnessed. We have marshaled our Federal resources so that the men and women fighting these blazes will have the tools they need to safely and effectively combat the spread of wildfires throughout the United States. Our Federal firefighters and management personnel are working under extremely dangerous conditions to protect the public and our lands from the threat of these wildfires.

Today I am announcing that the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, in conjunction with the Office of Personnel Management, will take immediate steps to make available as many as 2,000 Federal personnel for vital management and supervisory positions to support our fire-

fighting efforts. Additional managers and supervisors are needed to ensure additional fire-fighting crews have the proper supervision and management support that they need in the field. This action will immediately authorize individuals working long, stressful hours to be compensated appropriately. Our Nation owes a great debt of gratitude to these firefighters, managers, and their loved ones who sacrifice their energy and risk their lives in service to their country. It is our responsibility, in turn, to do all we can to protect and support them.