AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

And he has been with me through thick and thin, through light and dark. I've seen him deal with the challenges of raising his children under the scrutiny of the spotlight. I've seen him work with his wonderful wife in helping to make us think about things like mental illness, that we normally never wanted to talk about before. And I am telling you—everybody knows he's got a good mind—I'm telling you he's got a heart of gold, and he deserves your support.

And for a long time now, he's been at my back, and I intend to be with his. Thank you.

The Vice President of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:37 p.m. in Hall One at the State House Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to student Myreon Coleman of Marianna, AR, who introduced the President.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception in Little Rock

August 7, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being here, and thanks for being in such a good humor. My remarks tonight could be summed up in two phrases—thank you for everything; here's Al. [*Laughter*]

I want to begin by saying to Mark Pryor how much I appreciate his taking on this responsibility for the Vice President. I once did the same thing in the same job for President Carter, and I hope you have the same result.

I want to thank Blanche Lincoln for being here, for her support of our administration and of the Vice President, but most of all, for the people of this wonderful State of ours. It really is true that—you know, when Blanche decides that she wants something for Arkansas, you can let her wear you out, exhaust you, break you down until you're prostrate on the floor and you'll do it, or you just go on and do it anyway. Those are really the only two alternatives.

I want to thank Congressman Berry and Congressman Synder for representing you so well and being such steadfast allies. I thank them. I thank the members of the Congressional Black Caucus who have joined us here today from other States in the South. And I thank Senator Bumpers and Senator Pryor for coming. I miss them.

You know, Dale called me last week and told me a joke—[*laughter*]—and it isn't repeatable from this podium. [*Laughter*] But it was just like old times. And I was kind of feeling low when he did it—I worked for another 3 or 4 hours in a fabulous frame of mind after he did that. Now I've got to try to give the rest of this introduction without thinking about the punch line and laughing in the middle. [*Laughter*]

I want to say just about three things tonight. The first thing I want to say is this. Yesterday, before I left Washington, we announced that the country has now produced more than 19 million jobs since I became President, as part of the longest peacetime expansion in history, which has given us the highest homeownership, the lowest minority unemployment in history, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare rolls, a 26-year low in the crime rate.

The air and the water is cleaner; the food is safer; 90 percent of our children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time. Because of the HOPE scholarship, virtually every kid in this country can get a $1,500 tax credit to pay for tuition to go to college. A hundred thousand young people have served their country in AmeriCorps in 4 years. It took the Peace Corps 20 years to reach that milestone. We have been a force for peace from Bosnia and Kosovo to Northern Ireland to the Middle East.

And what I want you to know is I could not have achieved any of those things without the leadership and the support and the aggressive efforts of Vice President Al Gore.

In 1993, when all the Republicans said that the country would go down the drain if Bill Clinton's idea of economics—which was to return to basic arithmetic instead of smoke and mirrors—took off, he cast the deciding vote on the economic plan. And the rest is history. We went from the biggest deficit to the biggest surplus in the history of the country.

We made a decision that we wanted to do something to try to bring economic opportunity to people in places who had been left

behind with the empowerment zone program, the enterprise community program. He personally ran it, and it's been a terrific success. And a lot of you know that I was in the Mississippi Delta region of our State this week, and in the Delta and on Indian reservations and Appalachia a couple of weeks ago, trying to take nationally the approach pioneered by Al Gore, proving that we can bring opportunity to poor people who want jobs in this country.

Everybody in Arkansas ought to be concerned about whether we can get computers into all of our schools and hook them all up by the year 2000. And one of the things that we don't want to do is to go into the 21st century with a big digital divide between the rich and the poor. Al Gore led the fight to make sure that the Federal Government required all the schools in this country to have affordable rates so that every classroom in the poorest schools in America can be hooked up to the Internet. He did that, and he deserves credit for it.

And there are so many more things that I can hardly list them all. But just let me say one thing. The management of our national security and for our foreign relations is very important. He has handled very important, complicated, difficult aspects of our relationships with Russia. He has dealt with any number of other countries. He played a major role in the decisions we made when they were not popular to liberate Bosnia and Kosovo from ethnic cleansing, to free the people of Haiti from a military dictatorship, to push ahead with our support for the peace process in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to stand up to terrorists around the world and organize the world against it. In short, to prepare for the world we are living in.

People can say many things about these last 6½ years. Historians may have their different evaluations. There is one thing, I will make you a prediction, that there will not be a single voice of dissent on: Al Gore has been the single most influential, effective, powerful, important Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Now, the second thing I want to tell you is this: He understands what the purpose of this election is. He understands it's a job interview. He wants you to hire him, and he's gone to the trouble of telling you what he'll do if you give him the job.

Now, that may sound laughable to you. I think one of the reasons we've enjoyed the success we have is that I was forced to think through in advance what I'd do if I got the job, and I told the American people in greater detail than anyone ever had. Then when I asked Al to join me, we revised—we sat down together, and we went over every plan, and we revised it, and we put it out again.

And now that he's running, he's told you what his economic policy will be, what his anticrime policy will be, how he wants to use faith-based groups in communities to help solve social problems, how he wants to go out and do dramatic new things with medical research, to cure cancer and other things—and exactly how he proposes to do it.

And here's why that's important. Our generation—our generation, the baby boomers—have got an opportunity, because of the work we've done the last 6½ years, to save Social Security, to save Medicare and provide a prescription drug benefit, and to do it in a way so that when we retire, our kids don't have to support us and undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren. We have the opportunity to invest in the education of all of our children, so that we'll have world-class opportunities for the poor, the rich, the in-between of all races and backgrounds, so that our country will be strong. And we have the opportunity to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835.

Now, what I want you to understand is, we're living in a dynamic time. We're still embracing change. Our administration is the force for positive change. This is not going to be change versus the status quo election. This election is about what kind of change do you want; and do you want to build on what's worked and go beyond it, or do you want to go back to the ways that got us in the ditch in the first place? That's what the issue is. And you don't have to guess with Al Gore, not only because of his record, but because he's given you a roadmap.

And the third thing I want to tell you is this: I have been with this man in every conceivable kind of circumstance—good and

bad, personal and political. We have talked about our children. We have talked about our parents and their deaths. We have talked about every conceivable subject, personal and political. I know him as few people do. He is a good person. He is a decent person. He is a strong person. If everything was on the line and I had to pick an American to make a decision that I knew would be good for my country when my daughter is my age, I would pick Al Gore, and so should you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Vice President Al Gore.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. in Hall Two at the State House Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to State Attorney General Mark L. Pryor; and former Senators Dale Bumpers and David H. Pryor. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri

August 8, 1999

Thank you so much, Governor Carper, Governor Leavitt, and Governor Carnahan; thank you for welcoming me back to Missouri and to St. Louis, a place that has been so good to me and our family and our administration.

I must tell you, this has been a great day for me already. My staff says I'm entitled to a great day once in a while. I got to spend the night in my mother-in-law's house, go to early church in my church, and have breakfast with my friends, and then come to meet with you. Something bad may happen tomorrow, but this has been a good day. [*Laughter*]

When I first spoke to the Governors as President in 1993, I promised that we would build a new partnership, and I said I would try to hold up my end of the deal in three ways: first, by bringing down the Federal budget deficit so we could have lower interest rates and greater investment and a recovering economy. I've been a Governor through one boom and two busts; the booms make the job easier. Second, I promised to work with you to end welfare as we know it, to prove that poor people could succeed at home and at work. And third, I promised to loosen the rules and lift the regulations on Medicaid, that had long stopped Governors from providing more health care for less.

Six and a half years later I think it's clear that this partnership has worked, through the hard work of the American people and the economic plan we put in place in 1993, followed up with the bipartisan Balanced Budget Act of 1997. We've turned record deficits into record surpluses, as Governor Carper said. Most of your budgets also enjoy healthy surpluses.

We have the largest peacetime expansion in history, and on Friday I announced that we've gone over 19 million new jobs in the last 6½ years, with homeownership the highest in the history and minority unemployment the lowest ever recorded.

You all know, and I think Tom referred to this, that with the welfare waivers that we granted the States, followed by the Welfare Reform Act in 1996, your initiatives have led us to the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years now. Last week in Chicago, I was able to announce that every one of your States is meeting the work requirements in the new welfare law, something that the American people should be very grateful for. And we now have 12,000 businesses in our Welfare to Work Partnership committed to hiring people from the welfare rolls into the work force.

With the bipartisan balanced budget bill of '97, we created the children's health insurance program, $24 billion, the largest expansion of health coverage since the creation of Medicaid. We've waived or eliminated scores of laws and regulations on Medicaid, including one we all wanted to get rid of, the so-called Boren amendment. And last week I signed the federalism Executive order, putting to rest an issue that has divided the administration and the Governors for far too long.

In so many areas we share a common vision. I heard Governor Hunt talking when I walked in today—I thought, I've heard that voice for more than 20 years. It's still singing more or less the same song, and it gets better every time he sings it. I thank you, sir.

So I would say to you that this country is poised to enter a new century and a new