

than 1,000 EEOC enforcement personnel to identify and respond to wage discrimination. This would be, believe it or not, the first time the EEOC has ever received funding for this kind of training. The resources will also be used to educate employers and workers about their responsibilities and their rights under the law.

I made this request last year, and Congress failed to pass it. I again implore Congress to do the right thing and pass this funding. And I hope you will help us do this. If we train enough people to spot the problems early and work on them aggressively, the EEOC can help give us more stories like Sharon Long's, without the waiting time.

Second, another important way to close the wage gap is to open new opportunities. So we propose a \$17 million investment in the Department of Labor, to include resources to expand opportunities for women in nontraditional jobs. We're making headway in the construction industry. We're also going to put a special focus on the jobs of the future in the high-tech industry.

Today—listen to this—men outnumber women by more than two-to-one in many high-tech occupations. These are among the highest paid jobs in our economy, paying on average almost 80 percent above the average jobs. Now, that's another element of the digital divide. We need to close the divide in employment and expand opportunities for women in these kinds of jobs.

Third, and finally, we need to clearly send the message that wage discrimination against women is just as unacceptable as discrimination based on race or ethnicity. So once again I ask the Congress to pass the "Paycheck Fairness Act" sponsored by Representative DeLauro and Senator Tom Daschle. Pass it. It's a good bill. There is no excuse not to pass it. We plainly need to strengthen the law. We've had the other Equal Pay Act on the books since 1963, and we've still got a 25 percent gap. The evidence is there. We should have been able to eliminate this problem after 37 years, and we have to do more.

Again, I say—and I thank, particularly, Representative Morella for being here—this is not a Democratic or a Republican issue; it's a family issue, and it's an American issue. It's about what kind of country we want our

children to grow up in. I am delighted that these young women in the soccer team have come here as a team. And it must be a great thrill for them to see Michelle Akers, and I hope it spurs them to greater achievement in athletics and in academics. Most of them won't be professional soccer players. Most of them will be in the work force.

We do not want them to grow up and have children in a country which still has not solved this problem. And we can do better. Again I say that the same rules that apply on the playing field ought to apply in life. People who work hard and play by the rules ought to be rewarded, and rewarded in proportion to their contribution, not their gender.

This is a time of enormous promise. As I always say when I urge greater action to bring economic opportunity to poor areas that have been left behind, if we can't deal with this issue now, at a time of unprecedented prosperity, when in the wide world will we ever get around to dealing with it?

I thank the Members of Congress for their commitment. I thank you for being here. I ask you to help us bear down and act, now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Sharon Long, who introduced the President; and Michelle Akers, member, 1999 Women's World Cup U.S. championship team. The President also referred to Title IX—Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, part of Public Law 92-318, the Education Amendments of 1972.

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on Campaign Financing

January 24, 2000

The Court's opinion is a victory for democracy. The American people know that our political system needs to be fixed, and today's decision sets the stage for further reform. For years, I've challenged Congress to pass legislation that would ban the raising of unregulated soft money, address backdoor spending by outside organizations, and strengthen public discourse. Now I am again

asking Congress to restore the American people's faith in their democracy and pass real reform this year.

Statement on the Death of Bob Squier

January 24, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened by the death of Bob Squier. Bob was a valued adviser, a good friend, and a fine man. His loyalty, talent, and, above all, his perseverance helped Vice President Gore and me craft a winning reelection campaign in 1996 when many had counted us out. I owe him much.

Throughout the course of his career, Bob was a pioneer in the art of modern communications. With his documentary films, his pathbreaking political commentary, and his work for progressive candidates, Bob helped make policy and politics understandable and exciting for millions of Americans. Our thoughts and prayers tonight are with Prudy, his sons, and grandchildren.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status With China

January 24, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On November 15th of last year, my Administration signed an historic trade agreement with the People's Republic of China. Bringing China into the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the strong terms we negotiated will advance critical economic and national security goals. It will open a growing market to American workers, farmers, and businesses. And more than any other step we can take right now, it will draw China into a system of international rules and thereby encourage the Chinese to choose reform at home and integration with the world. For these reasons, I will make it a top priority in the new year to seek congressional support for permanent Normal Trade Relations (NTR) with China.

A Good Deal for America

This agreement is good for America. It is important to understand the *one-way nature*

of the concessions in this agreement. China has agreed to grant the United States *significant new access* to its market, while we have agreed simply to maintain the market access policies we *already* apply to China by granting it permanent NTR. China's commitments are enforceable in the WTO and include specially negotiated rules. In the event of a violation, the U.S. will have the right to trade retaliation against China.

China's comprehensive market-opening concessions will benefit U.S. workers, farmers and businesses. On U.S. priority agricultural products, tariffs will drop from an average of 31% to 14% in January 2004. China will expand access for bulk agricultural products, permit private trade in these products, and eliminate export subsidies. Industrial tariffs on U.S. products will fall from an average of 25% in 1997 to an average of 9.4% by 2005. In information technology, tariffs on products such as computers, semiconductors, and all Internet related equipment will decrease from an average of 13% to zero by 2005. The agreement also opens China's market for services, including distribution, insurance, telecommunications, banking, professional and environmental services. Considering that our farmers and workers are the most productive in the world, this agreement promises vast opportunities for American exports.

Prior to the final negotiations, Democrats and Republicans in Congress raised legitimate concerns about the importance of safeguards against unfair competition. This agreement effectively addresses those concerns. No agreement on WTO accession has ever contained stronger measures against unfair trade, notably a "product-specific" safeguard that allows us to take measures focused directly on China in case of an import surge that threatens a particular industry. This protection remains in effect a full 12 years after China enters the WTO and is stronger and more targeted relief than that provided under our current Section 201 law.

The agreement also protects against dumping. China agreed that for 15 years after its accession to the WTO, the United States may employ special methods, designed for nonmarket economies, to counteract dumping.