

should stay at this until the day when we are truly shocked if we hear a little boy or a girl say something at school about witnessing a violent incident in their home, when it is so rare, people gasp in astonishment.

We're a long way from there. But we owe it to our kids and all the women and children who have already been injured to keep at it until we reach that day.

Thank you very, very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:32 p.m. at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Connie Trujillo, executive director, Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families; Greg Neal, director, Genoveva Chavez Community Center; and New Mexico State Attorney General Patsy A. Madrid.

Remarks at a New Mexico Coordinated Campaign Victory 2000 Reception in Santa Fe

September 25, 2000

Thank you very much. First, ladies and gentlemen, let me just thank you for coming here. I want to thank our hosts. And thank you, Diane, and thank you, Bill Sisneros, the Santa Fe Democratic chair.

I thank all the tribal leaders who are here. I thank your predecessor, Earl Potter, who is here tonight. Thank you very much. I'm glad to see you.

I want to thank Congressman Udall. He's done a great job. He's really fun to work with, and as you can see, he's sort of a high-energy person. *[Laughter]* And he has this idea which, there for a few years in Washington, I was afraid was getting altogether too rare. He actually thinks he's supposed to go back to Washington and get something done for you, instead of just—*[laughter]*—and he's really, really good, and you should be very proud of him. I like him very much.

I want to thank my friend of more than 30 years John Kelly, for running for Congress and for his service as United States attorney. And I urge you to do what you can to help him. We're just six seats short of being in the majority. And it makes a huge difference. I'll just give you an example.

Today, before I came here, I went over to a shelter for battered women and troubled children and families. And we're in this big struggle to get the Violence Against Women Act reauthorized, which ought to be an absolute laydown. And we clearly have a bipartisan majority in both Houses for this legislation.

But the leadership, for reasons I don't quite understand, has not scheduled it for a vote, and it's supposed to run out Friday night. If we had six more seats, it would have been reauthorized months and months ago. So I say to you, it's a big issue for all the New Mexico-specific reasons and also because your Nation needs it, I think, very clearly.

I'd like to say more than anything else a word of thanks to a number of people. First, on behalf of Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore, I want to thank the people of New Mexico for sticking with us for two elections and giving us your electoral vote.

And I want to say even more, thank you for how much I've learned about America and specific parts of America, from the people of New Mexico; from our friends the Sikhs, many of who were at the Indian Prime Minister's dinner the other night; from most especially the tribal leaders and those whom they represent. I was at the, you know, on the Shiprock Reservation not very long ago. And I think I'm the only American President ever to go to two Native American reservations, and I know I am the first President since James Monroe in the 1820's to invite all of the tribal leaders back to Washington to meet with me.

And I've had liaison in the White House to the Native American community since the first day I became President. And I can't begin to tell you what it's meant to me to try to work with you to meet the common challenges we face and try to help solve some longstanding problems and try to change the whole nature of the relationship between the United States and the Native American tribes.

I want to thank Tom Udall for what he said about me and my friends. You know, I have to say for my friends, I may be the only President in the entire history of the country who was literally elected because of

my friends. *[Laughter]* I mean, I had the lowest net worth of any President since Harry Truman when I got elected. And as my predecessor never tired of telling the American people, I was just the Governor of a small southern State. *[Laughter]* And when I ran, I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. *[Laughter]* You know something? I still do.

And if Bruce and Alice and John Pound really thought I was going to be President in 1988, they were—that's 75 percent of the people in the country who felt that way, my mother being the other. *[Laughter]* But it's worked out pretty well for America.

And that's just the last thing I want to tell you. I hope you're proud of our party and proud of where we've come, compared to where we were, and proud of the fact that, if you listened to the debate, half the time they sound like us now. *[Laughter]* Or they kind of want to sound like us. Like they can't possibly admit that they're going to blow a hole in the deficit again, because being for a balanced budget and getting rid of this debt is now the thing to do. And I could go through a lot of other issues.

But what I'd like to remind you of is that ideas have consequences. I think sometimes we forget that in politics. We just kind of like the way it feels: Somebody looks good, sounds good, got a few good moves, gets through a press conference all right. Ideas have consequences, just like they do in every other aspect of your life.

We changed the economic policy, the crime policy, the welfare policy, the education policy, the health policy, the environmental policy, and the foreign policy of the United States. Did we make some mistakes along the way? Of course we did. Not everything turned out just the way we intended in every policy. But if you look back at every single one of those areas, we're stronger today and different than we were then.

So people need to understand that this is a very big election. I hope New Mexico will stick with Al Gore and Joe Lieberman. It's really, really important. We need you.

In the parlance of my culture, I realize I'm preaching to the saved here, so I won't belabor this. But I will tell you just, you know, what I feel, as someone who is not running for office for the first time since be-

fore some of you were born, in this room. *[Laughter]* Most days, I'm okay about it. *[Laughter]*

But, you know, we worked so hard to turn the country around and get it to this point. And this is really the first time in my lifetime we've been in a position to build the future of our dreams for our children, because our circumstances are good, because we have prosperity, social progress, the absence of pressing domestic crisis or external threat. We've got a lot of problems; that's part of being alive. We'll always have problems as long as we're alive. And we have some big, big long-term challenges.

When all us baby boomers retire, there will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare. We don't want to bankrupt our kids, their ability to raise our grandchildren.

We are the most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse student population in our history and the biggest one by a good long ways, the first group of kids in the schools today, bigger than the baby boom generation, who need, even more than we did, a world-class education. We actually know now how to turn around failing schools. So the real issue is whether we intend to do it and what the National Government's role should be in that great crusade.

Tom mentioned something about environmental problems. No one denies anymore that climate change is real. We just had a fresh study last week from a huge polar ice-cap that demonstrated conclusively that the 1990's were the hottest decade in a thousand years. Now, this could have enormous consequences for every farmer in America. It could—if we don't reverse it—I worked so hard to save the Florida Everglades, and in 30 years, a bunch of it could be underwater. I mean, really underwater, not just sort of sliding along the top like today.

How are we going to grow the economy and actually reduce the environmental threats? The truth is that there is on-the-shelf technology available today that would enable us to drastically reduce our emission of greenhouse gases without having any impact, except a positive one, on our economy, and would allow us to live in more harmony with our natural environment—today.

And we are very, very close, if we continue the research, to developing automobiles that get 80 miles to the gallon, that operate on fuel cells or dual-use electricity and fuel. We are quite close to a chemical breakthrough in biomass fuels that is the equivalent of when people figured out a hundred years ago how to take crude oil and crack the petroleum molecule and turn it into gasoline, which changed the whole future of the world.

Now, the problem with all biofuels today, is it takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to make 8 gallons of ethanol. But if we get over the last chemical problem, we'll be able to make 8 gallons of ethanol with 1 gallon of gasoline. And it won't just have to be corn. It can be rice hulls. It can be field grasses. It can be nearly anything. And when that happens, it will be the equivalent of 500-mile-a-gallon cars, and it will radically change the whole environmental future of America.

Are we going to pursue these things or continue in denial? Or, as my daughter's generation says, "Remember, dad, it's not just a river in Egypt." [*Laughter*]

This is a big issue, a huge issue. And there are lots of others. Ideas have consequences. In this election for President, in the elections for Senate and the Congress, we have different economic policies. We're for a tax cut. We're for investments in education and health care, but we believe we have to keep paying down the debt to keep interest rates down and economic growth high, that we were profligate, inexcusably, in quadrupling the national debt in the 12 years before Al Gore and I came to Washington. It was wrong.

All the economic analysis I've seen indicates that the difference in the Republican and the Democratic economic proposal—they'll give you a bigger tax cut in the short run, especially if you're in an upper-income group. And once they do that and partially privatize Social Security, the non-Social Security surplus is gone, long gone. We're into the Social Security spending again. Interest rates will be about a percent a year higher over 10 years. If somebody in New Mexico wants to talk to you about tax cuts, tell them that if the Gore plan keeps interest rates a percent lower a year for 10 years, here's what it's worth to them in a tax cut:

A percent lower interest rates gives you, over a decade, \$390 billion in lower home mortgage payments; \$30 billion in lower monthly car payments; \$15 billion in lower college loan payments.

Now, if my math is right, that's a \$435 billion tax cut that goes overwhelmingly to ordinary working folks and American families, kids trying to get an education, just by keeping interest rates down. There is a huge difference. It's hard to tell through the smoke and fire of the momentary campaign. This is one of the central decisions the American people have to make: Was I right or wrong to say, yes, we're going to increase our investment in education and health care and the environment, but we're going to keep driving this debt down and we get out of the deficit, then we're going to use the surplus to keep driving the debt down? Was I right or wrong? Is it the right or wrong course for America?

Someday we'll have another recession, and we may need a big tax cut. We'll have to run a deficit because in recession, unemployment goes up, which means not as many people are paying into the Government, and expenses go up, which means there is more money going out.

But when I became President, we didn't even have any tools left to fight recessions with tax cuts and deficit spending, because we were running a deficit every year of over \$200 billion. This is a huge decision.

Now, this State has got a lot of people, I think, who are moderate Republicans and independents who think of themselves as fiscal conservatives and may find it hard to register that even after 8 years, we are the party of fiscal responsibility. And it's the right thing to do, and it's a bigger tax cut, in lower interest rates.

We have differences in education policy. We think we ought to help these States that have growing student populations with smaller classes in the early grades, with building new schools and modernizing schools. They don't believe that's the Federal Government's business. I think it's America's business. I think every kid that needs to be in an after-school program or a preschool program ought to be in it. And we've got the money to do it, and we ought to do it.

We have huge differences in health care, right? Patients' Bill of Rights, exhibit A: We're for it; they're not, really. Now, as we get close to the election and the heat turns up, they may kind of come across the goal line here at the 11th hour, and I'm hoping. [Laughter] Medicare prescription drugs: They want kind of a Rube Goldberg setup where we give some money to the poorest Americans and tell the rest of them they can buy insurance. And God bless them, I've got to give it to them, even the insurance companies—we fought so much over the last 8 years, I take my hat off to them. They have been totally honest here. They have told the Republican Congress, "Look, you cannot have an affordable private insurance program for prescription drugs for elderly people. It won't work. We can't do that."

Nevada passed a law just like the Republicans are trying to shove through in Congress—the exact same law. You know how many insurance companies have offered people above 150 percent of the poverty line insurance for Medicare prescription—for drugs? Zero. I tell you, with all the fights I've had with the health insurance companies, I want to compliment them. They have been scrupulously honest here. They have told the truth. They have said, "There is no insurance market here. Why are you doing this? We don't want to look bad when we don't offer insurance or we've got to make the premium so high nobody can buy it."

But the pharmaceutical companies are against having Medicare offer a prescription drug benefit to all the seniors who need it. It doesn't make any sense, does it? They're afraid that they'll acquire such market power, they'll be able to get prices down to where they're almost as low as they are in every other country in the world. Now, this is a big deal. These are huge differences.

And there are massive environmental differences. They have made a commitment to repeal my order setting aside 43 million roadless acres in the national forests. The Audubon Society says it's the most important conservation move in 40 years. And they are committed to reversing it. They said they may take away some of the national monuments I've set up. They say that clean air standards are too tough. We've still got a lot

of little kids getting asthma in this country because they can't breathe the air.

And goodness knows, if we haven't proved that you can clean the environment and grow the economy, then somebody hasn't been paying attention. It's good for the economy to clean up the environment. Every single time for 30 years we've raised the environmental standards, the act of raising the standards and implementing them has created more jobs than it's cost—every single time for 30 years. But we're still debating it.

So you've got to go out across this State and say, "Look, there's a different economic policy, a different education policy, a different health care policy, a different environmental policy. There is a different crime policy." They're against my program to put 150,000 police on the street and have promised to get rid of it.

Now, this is the first time ever that crime has dropped for 7 years in a row. We're at a 27-year low. The country is safer than it's been in over a quarter century. One of the reasons is that we put all those police on the street. They were also wrong about the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. There hasn't been a single hunter in New Mexico miss a day of a season, not a day.

But even if you forget about that for a minute, they actually want to repeal the program that is putting 150,000 police on our streets, that's giving us a safer—why? They say it's not the Federal Government's business. All I know is, when people don't feel safe—that's that Violence Against Women Act we just did—if people don't feel safe, they don't have much emotional space to worry about what your economic policy is or your education policy or your environmental policy or anything else.

So I'm just asking you to go out across this State and talk to your friends around the country. Every one of you know and deal with people who never show up at events like this, have never been to a political event in their lives, but they'll all be there on election day, because they believe in America and they want to be good citizens.

And if people really understand the nature of the choice, we will win. We will win in New Mexico. We will win the Presidency and the Vice Presidency. John will win. We'll get

the Congress back, and we'll keep going forward. And I just don't want to see us give up this.

I worry. You know, sometimes it's harder to make a decision, a good decision in good times than bad times. I know people took a chance on me in '92. I know they got tired of hearing that—you know, they got worried when they heard, "He's a Governor of a small southern State, and where is it?" [*Laughter*] It was actually a bad strategy. I mean, think how many thousand people there are in New Mexico from Arkansas—half of Chicago, half of Detroit. It was a bad strategy. If you come from a poor southern State where people couldn't make a living after World War II, you've got kin folks in 20 States. I mean, you can't lose them. [*Laughter*] Anyway, I know they were worried about it. But come on, it wasn't that big a chance because the country was in terrible shape. We had to do something different.

Now people really do feel like they've got options. And there's not a person in this audience, at least who's 30 years of age or over, who cannot think of one time in your life when you made a big mistake, not because times were so tough but because times were so good, you thought you didn't have to concentrate. You can't live three decades or more without making that kind of mistake. That's what America has to avoid in this election. And you've got to go out and tell people what the differences are and what the nature of the choice is.

When Al Gore says, "You ain't seen nothing yet," that's not just a political slogan. I believe that. I do. I believe that with all my heart. I believe the best stuff is still out there. I really do believe. You know, I think within 10 years, measured by today's terms, we'll be driving cars around that get 150 miles a gallon. I believe that mothers will come home with their babies, after they give birth, with little gene cards that will tell them how to plan their future, and the life expectancy of newborns will be 90 years of age.

That's what I believe. I think this stuff is going to happen. I think technology will lift the lives of the disabled people in this country to a level never before imagined. I think we'll totally re-imagine what it means to get older. I think we'll think of people 70 and

75 as sort of middle-aged people. They'll be out doing things, you know, running marathons and stuff. [*Laughter*] I think all this is going to happen. It's going to be a very interesting time, if we make the right decisions.

Will there be problems? Oh, yes, there will. You'll have to worry about chemical and biological warfare and terrorists putting them in plastic containers that don't go off in airport metal detectors. There will be all kinds of challenges out there. There will be problems until the end of time. But we have a chance to make this the most peaceful, exciting, and harmonizing time in history.

And I'll just close with this. I think the most important thing about our party is that we are not interested in asserting our inherent superiority over anyone. We believe in one America. I mean really believe in it. We're glad to have people in our country who have different backgrounds, different heritages, different faiths. And we want everybody to be proud of themselves, their tribe, and their faith—everybody.

But we believe the only way we can really celebrate our diversity is if we accept the fact that our common humanity is the most important fact of life on this Earth. And so we really do believe that everybody counts; everybody should have a chance; we all do better when we help each other.

And I believe the central fact of our time is not the scientific or the information technology revolution. It is the growth of interdependence within countries and beyond national borders. We're getting more and more and more caught up in what Martin Luther King called the inescapable web of mutuality. And our party believes in it. That's what one America means.

And I honestly believe that if we just keep purging ourselves of our fears of people who are different from us, we keep looking for common ground, we keep reaffirming common values, that the best is out there. But you have to share this sort of stuff with people in this election. And you just cannot assume that because we're so much better off than we were 8 years ago and because the case is obvious to you, that everybody else will be there, because remember, the better

things are, the easier it is to stop concentrating.

So you go out and take some time every day between now and the election and share this with our fellow citizens and bring us home a great victory.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the La Terazza Room at the La Fonda Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Diane D. Denish, State chair, Bill Sisneros, Santa Fe County chair, and Earl Potter, former State chair, Democratic Party of New Mexico; John Kelly, candidate for New Mexico's First Congressional District; and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India.

Statement on the Deaths of United Nations Refugee Workers in Indonesia and in Guinea

September 25, 2000

I join all Americans in mourning the recent deaths of United Nations refugee workers in Indonesia and in Guinea.

On September 6 in West Timor, three staff members of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were brutally murdered by a rampaging local militia. One of those killed was an American, Carlos Caceres-Collazo, who was still new to the cause of helping refugees and displaced persons, but already dedicated to it, even in conditions of great danger and hardship.

Two weeks later, in the West African country of Guinea, another UNHCR staff member was killed, and a colleague abducted, by an unidentified armed group. I extend my condolences to their families and to UNHCR, which has been shocked by these tragedies. We hope that the abducted employee will be returned to safety.

These international civil servants were willing to take enormous risks and endure great hardship to protect and assist the most vulnerable refugees, displaced and war-affected people. Humanitarian workers operate on the principles of neutrality and impartiality, and it is tragic that they so frequently become the victims of willful violence themselves. We must work to end the culture of impunity that allows such violence to flourish and dedicate ourselves to strengthening the

protection of those whose mission is to help their fellow human beings.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Proposed "Medicine Equity and Drug Safety Act of 2000"

September 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

In your letter, you outlined a number of health care issues that you indicated could be resolved before Congress adjourns. I want to be equally clear about my priorities and hopes for progress this fall. As the days dwindle in this session of Congress, I am seriously concerned about the lack of movement on some of our most important issues. I am, however, encouraged to learn from your letter that the Republican leadership is now committed to providing Americans with access to prescription drugs available at lower cost from other countries.

As you know, our people are growing more and more concerned that the pharmaceutical industry often sells the same drugs for a much higher price in the United States than it does in other countries, even when those drugs are manufactured here at home. This forces some of our most vulnerable citizens, including seniors and people with disabilities, to pay the highest prices for prescription drugs in the world. This is simply unacceptable.

That is why I support the "Medicine Equity and Drug Safety Act of 2000," which the Senate passed by an overwhelming vote of 74 to 21. This important legislation would give Americans access to quality medications at the lower prices paid by citizens in other nations. The Senate bill, sponsored by Senators Jeffords, Wellstone, Dorgan and others, would allow wholesalers and pharmacists to import FDA-approved prescription drugs and would establish a new safety system intended to track these imports and test them for authenticity and degradation. Before this provision could take effect, the Secretary of Health and Human Services would be required to certify that the regulations would, first, pose no risk to the public health; and, second, significantly decrease prices paid by consumers.