

approval of the LTBT took place less than 2 months after it was signed and within 7 weeks of its submission to the Senate. Contrast that with the CTBT. A year after it was submitted, the Senate has yet to take any action toward ratification.

The CTBT will ban all nuclear weapons explosions. As a result, it will constrain the development of more sophisticated and powerful nuclear weapons and give us a powerful new tool in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The American people understand that Senate approval of the CTBT is the right thing to do. I strongly urge the Senate to give its advice and consent as early as possible next year.

NOTE: In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Naraz Sharif of Pakistan.

Statement on House Action on Temporary Visas for Highly Skilled Immigrants

September 24, 1998

I am pleased that the House of Representatives has moved quickly to pass a bipartisan compromise to address a shortage of skilled workers, while providing new training and protections for U.S. workers. To address that shortage and maintain America's competitive edge, we must give U.S. workers new opportunities to train and to learn new skills. This legislation helps us meet that challenge by providing up to \$250 million over 3 years in new funding to educate and train Americans for the jobs of the future.

This compromise institutes new reforms to ensure that employers do not replace U.S. workers with temporary foreign workers and requires employers to recruit U.S. workers. In short, it contains new investments in training, tougher enforcement, and new protections for U.S. workers. I look forward to Congress sending me a bill that is consistent with our bipartisan agreement.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception

September 24, 1998

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, I don't know if you can feel it, but I'm even happier to see you than you are to be here. [*Laughter*] I want to say—you remember that famous quote attributed to Harry Truman, "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog?" [*Laughter*] Well, I got a dog, and I love him very much, but I'm glad to have you in the White House here tonight. I feel that I have friends here.

I want to thank all the previous speakers. I thank Maria Echaveste and John Podesta for the magnificent work they do for you and the American people every day. I thank Steve Grossman and Roy Romer for taking over our party at what was a financially perilous time, bringing us back to health, and helping to set up the organization, the structure, and the effort that has led to this incredibly talented and diverse array of people being here tonight representing the Democratic Party from every corner of our land.

I want to thank the Vice President. I've said this many times—the historians may argue about whether they agree with what I have done or not—there is one fact about our administration that is absolutely beyond any historical argument. The Vice President of the United States has had more influence over more decisions in more areas of our life and done more good by far than any person who has ever held that position in the history of the United States.

I want to thank Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee from Houston for being here and for being a stalwart supporter of our programs and initiatives. She's a great leader. I, too, join in thanking John Sweeney and all the members of the labor movement who are here for the incredible energy and direction and drive they have given to their movement and to our country.

I know we have a number of mayors here: I think Mayor Hammer from San Jose and Mayor Pastrick from East Chicago are here.

If there are any other mayors who are here, I'm sorry I didn't call your name, but I love you anyway. [Laughter]

Let me say, you all know why we're here, but I would like to set the stage here. I, too, thank you for your role in what we have been able to do. Next week will mark the seventh anniversary—I can't believe this—the seventh anniversary of the day I announced my candidacy for President, October 3, 1991. Now, I said then that I was running because I wanted America to have a mission and a vision for the 21st century, to preserve the American dream, to restore the hopes of the forgotten middle class to reclaim the future for our children. Even then I did not know that 7 years later, through two long elections and various trials and tribulations, I would be able to say that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the smallest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years, next week the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years; that we would, with the HOPE scholarship, tax credits for all higher education, deductibility of student loans, more Pell grants, we would have opened the doors of college education to all Americans; that we would have protected the environment, passed the Brady bill, almost finished putting our 100,000 police on the street, the family and medical leave law, the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill; that we'd have cleaner water, cleaner air, safer food, fewer toxic waste dumps. That's all to the good, and I am very, very grateful for the chance to have served, for the chance that Hillary and I have had to live here and work, and by the way, she's out on the trail tonight and wishes she could be here, as has already been said.

But I want to say to you also, you're here to look to the future, because the real question is, what are we going to do with this moment we have; what shall we do with this moment of prosperity and confidence?

The people in the other party believe they're going to whip us with M&M's in this election. [Laughter] That stands for money. They've got a lot of it. If you kill the legislation designed to protect our kids from the dangers of tobacco and you kill campaign finance reform, you can get yourself a good chunk of change. And they'll have more

money than we do, even though we're working hard to close the gap.

The other thing they'll have is midterms. Why should midterms matter? Because they think, "Well, our people will feel good, but they'll be complacent." And our people don't make as much money, don't have as much free time, have to go to more trouble to vote. And normally, we Democrats get a much bigger vote during Presidential elections than we do in these off-year elections.

Now, our enemy is not adversity. Adversity is our friend. Our enemy is complacency. And so I say to you: I'm glad you're here; I'm glad you cheered me; I'm glad you're having a good time. But I want you to be serious just for a minute. You've heard what they've all said. What have we done since January, when I have pleaded for the chance to work with the Republicans to build this country for the 21st century, when I have said, "Why should education be a partisan issue; why should the Patients' Bill of Rights be a partisan issue?" People show up in the emergency room—you don't have to show your party registration.

How can the environment be a partisan issue? We all breathe the same air and drink the same water. How can keeping our economic growth going by preventing this financial contagion that's engulfing so much of the rest of the world from hitting any more countries that are our trading partners, or from eventually biting us—how can that possibly be a partisan issue? Shoot, I bet Republicans have made even more money than Democrats have out of me being President. [Laughter] How can that be a partisan issue?

How can saving Social Security before we just go out and start spending the surplus to make votes with a tax cut in an election year be a partisan issue? We've been waiting for 29 years; I've been working for 6 years on this. I told you we'd get rid of it. And now, before the red ink turns to black and dries, they want to start spending the money again. And you know and I know when the baby boomers retire, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security, if all the present trends continue.

Now, this is a big deal. Half the people on Social Security today have been lifted out

of poverty because of Social Security. Now, we don't have to do anything about it, we can go ahead and run it in the ditch if you want to. And when we do, we'll have two choices: We can either tax our children to pay for our retirement and undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren; or we can decide we can't possibly do that, and we can slash benefits hugely and have a lot of elderly people living in poverty again. Or we can say, "I don't care if it's just a few weeks before the election; I've been waiting 29 years for a balanced budget. We're going to have a surplus now, and before we spend it on indulgences or even things we need for ourselves, we ought to save Social Security and avoid those bad alternatives."

Now, that's what this is about. So—I'm just telling you: They've got money; they've got midterms. But we have the issues. And you need to go home and ask people a simple question: "Do you like where we are? Are we better off than we were 6 years ago?" And they'll say, yes. "Do you really believe we've met the long-term challenges of the country? Do you think there's nothing left to be done?" And they'll say, no. And then you can say, "You can choose partisanship, or you can choose progress. You can choose power, or you can choose people. You can choose politics, or you can choose principle. But if you stay home, you're choosing all the wrong things. You can't stay home." We need to go out and say, "Look, we stand for saving Social Security for the 21st century. We're not against tax cuts in the President's budget. There are tax cuts for child care, for education, for the environment. But they're all paid for."

We stand for taking average class sizes down to 18, and putting—in the early grades—and putting 100,000 teachers out there. We stand for higher standards, and we stand for stopping social promotion. But we don't want to hurt kids, so we want every child who needs it to be able to have an after-school program and a summer school program. And we want to pay the college expenses of 35,000 bright young people and let them pay off all that money by going into the inner cities and teaching and helping our children and lifting them up. That's what we stand for. We stand for building or repairing

5,000 schools. We stand for hooking every classroom in the country, not just the wealthiest ones, up to the Internet. That's what we stand for.

And we stand for a Patients' Bill of Rights that affects everybody, without regard to their partisan affiliation. If you walked out of here tonight and you got hit by a car, wouldn't you like to go to the nearest emergency room instead of being carried 5 or 6 miles because your plan required it? If you go to the doctor next month and he said, "I'm sorry, you've got a condition I can't treat. I want to send you to a specialist," wouldn't you like the doctor be able to do that and not have an accountant be able to stop that doctor? If you work for a small business and your employer changes health care providers when you're 6 months pregnant, wouldn't you like to keep your obstetrician until your baby is born? If somebody in your family is having chemotherapy, don't you think they ought to be able to finish the treatment before they have to change doctors?

This is not idle—we're talking about real stuff here. There are 160 million Americans in managed care plans and millions more who could be affected by this. I've been through this, and I bet a lot of you have. You have somebody in your family who is taking chemotherapy, and you sit around trying to laugh about it. You try to make jokes about whether you're going to lose your hair or not or when you're going to get sick. How in goodness name could we ever justify letting any system prevail where you could say, "I'm sorry, you're midway through your treatment. Now go see Dr. Jones."

And don't you think your medical records ought to be private? Now, let me just tell you what this is about. That's what this election is about. We had a bill that did that. In the House the Republicans passed a bill that didn't guarantee the emergency room, didn't guarantee the specialist, didn't guarantee your treatment couldn't be interrupted, didn't guarantee your privacy, and left 100 million Americans out of what little bit it did do. And in the Senate, when they tried to bring up our bill, the Senate was so concerned that they would have to vote against our bill to stay with the insurance companies that the leader of the Senate shut the Senate

down for 4 hours in a panic, so it could die by stealth.

Now, that's what this election is about. Real people. Somebody making a minimum wage—that's worth going out to vote for. Killing the minimum wage at a time when we have low unemployment and low inflation, when we all believe in the principle that everyone should participate in this prosperity; 12 million people who are working hard, not on welfare, trying to do their part, paying their taxes.

We've got an economic program up there that the Vice President and Secretary Cuomo developed to put more investment, more free enterprise jobs in inner-city areas and rural areas and on Indian reservations where people haven't felt this recovery. If we can't give them a chance to be part of the American dream now, with the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, when in the world will we ever get around to doing it? When will we ever do it?

Look, this is serious. You need to go back home and say, every time you see one of their ads on television you say to yourself: "Well, why did you kill the education program? Why did you kill the Patients' Bill of Rights? Why did you kill the environmental initiatives? Why did you kill campaign finance reform? Why did you kill the tobacco legislation? Why did you kill minimum wage? What are we doing here anyway?"

This is a better country today because we have worked on the people's needs. And whenever we could we have reached out to the Republicans and invited them to join us. They made all these decision this year not me. They have been in the majority. With all this financial turmoil going on around the world, I have asked for 8 long months to simply pay our contribution to the International Monetary Fund, just so we could grow and keep growing and keep creating American jobs.

So I say to you, I want you to go home, and I want you to tell everybody the country is doing well, we're better off than we were 6 years ago because we followed the right policies. But we've got a lot to do. We've got to save Social Security first. We've got to give our kids the best schools in the world. We've got to pass the Patient's Bill of Rights.

We've got to keep improving the environment. We've got to keep this economic growth going.

Now, if you want progress, vote for us; if you want partisanship, vote for them. If you want to vote for people, vote for us; if you want to vote for politics, vote for them. We'll prove M&M's doesn't amount to anything compared to the principle, the power, and the passion of the American people and the people's party.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, and Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; Mayor Susan Hammer of San Jose, CA; and Mayor Robert Pastrick of East Chicago, IN.

Remarks on Departure for Chicago, Illinois and an Exchange With Reporters

September 25, 1998

Hurricane Georges

The President. Good morning. For the past several days Hurricane Georges has torn through the Caribbean costing many lives. Now, as we speak, the hurricane is bearing down on South Florida. I have spoken several times with FEMA director, James Lee Witt. For the past day an emergency response team has been on the ground working with the government and the people of Florida to prepare for the storm. We are as ready as we can be, and we pray that the human and material costs will be limited.

In the coming days we will work as closely as possible with the State of Florida to provide whatever assistance will do the most good.

Continuing Resolution

A few moments ago I signed stop-gap legislation to keep the Government open and running at the start of the new fiscal year. The legislation is a regrettable sign that the Republican majority in Congress has failed to address the urgent priorities of the American people. There is only one week left in