

- (e) mechanisms for collecting input from the agency's stakeholders regarding agency use of the Internet.
10. Items 1–8 of this memorandum and my July 1, 1997, and November 30, 1998, memoranda shall be conducted subject to the availability of appropriations and consistent with agencies' priorities and my budget, and to the extent permitted by law.
 11. The Vice President shall continue his leadership in coordinating the United States Government's electronic commerce strategy. Further, I direct that the heads of executive departments and agencies report to the Vice President and to me on their progress in meeting the terms of this memorandum, through the Electronic Commerce Working Group in its annual report.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Remarks at a Democratic
Congressional Campaign
Committee Dinner**

December 17, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me, first of all, say how profoundly grateful I am to be ending 7 years in the Presidency with the support of people like you, in the home of my great friends Terry and Dorothy, with allies like Patrick Kennedy and Dick Gephardt. This is a holiday season, and it's most important for us to express our gratitude. And I am grateful, and I want to say thank you.

I also will give you a gift—a brief speech. [Laughter] All of you heard it before, anyway. [Laughter] That reminds me of a great moment in my political education. In the mideighties, Tina Turner came to Little Rock to give a concert; she was making her comeback. And she had just put out that “Private Dancer” album. And she had a saxophone player who was a weight lifter—I don't know if you remember that—the guy could bench press me on a cold day. [Laughter]

So I went to this concert, and I took a bunch of friends of mine. And I was sitting on the front row because the guy that ran the place knew I liked her. So she sings all her new songs, and she does real well, and the crowd goes crazy. And in the end, the band starts playing her very first hit, “Proud Mary.” And she comes up to the microphone, and the crowd goes crazy, and she said, “You know, I've been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it.” [Laughter] So maybe you'll put up with this speech one more time. [Laughter]

I wanted to say very briefly why I'm here. I'm not running for anything; I'm here because none of the things that our administration has been able to do for America would have been possible if it hadn't been for the support of the Democrats in the Congress. Whether in the majority, when we passed the economic plan of '93 without a single vote from the Republicans, when we passed the crime bill in '94 with just a few votes; or when we were in the minority in the Congress, but because they stuck with me—if the Republicans didn't want me fixing them Christmas dinner, they had to make a deal with us and continue to move this country forward. None of it would have been possible without them.

I'm here because of what Dick Gephardt said. I'll say it in blunter terms. I think I owe him. We would never have lost the House of Representatives if they hadn't had to vote alone on an economic plan that revitalized this country. We'd never have the balanced budget; we'd never have the surplus; we'd never have the low interest rates and the high investment and the economic growth if we hadn't announced, and then they hadn't ratified by voting for, that economic plan in 1993. And they did not deserve to lose the House because of the deliberate misrepresentations about what was in the plan and what it would do to America that the people on the other side made before—to be fair to the voters—they could know one way or the other whether it was going to work; they weren't feeling it.

I'm here because they had the guts—including a lot of Congressmen from rural areas—to say to the NRA, “There's nothing wrong with the Brady bill. We ought to do background checks before we give people

handguns; there's nothing wrong with a waiting period. We ought to get rid of these assault weapons; kids don't need them on urban streets so that country kids can take a .22 or a 12 gauge and go hunting. This is crazy."

But when they voted for it in '94 they had to go right into the teeth of an election with people telling them they'd voted to take their guns away, and before the voters could possibly know. You have no idea. I'm here because they were brave enough to take on with me the problem of trying to extend health insurance to all Americans, and then they had to put up with having our efforts mischaracterized. One member of the Democratic caucus told me the other day, he said, "You know, they said if I voted for the President's health care plan, it would lead to a big increase in uninsured Americans; and I voted for his plan, and sure enough, we had a big increase in uninsured Americans." [Laughter] So I think they got a raw deal after doing a great job for America.

But the third thing and by far the most important reason I'm here is, after January 20, 2001, I won't be President anymore, but I'll still be an American. And almost more than anybody else, because of the life I've lived, I have an informed opinion about what is necessary to make the most of the new century for these children here. And by far the most important reason to give the Democrats a majority; to give Jane Harman from California, who's here, her old seat back; and to restore them to the majority—you'd be amazed how many Senate seats we can win. This Senate thing is shaping up pretty well. Because we're going to make some decisions in the next 5 years that will have a big impact on the next 50 years. And I want the members of my party, who have brought the country to where it is today from where it was 7 years ago, to be the leaders in making those decisions.

Now, little Mary was sitting here a minute ago. I've told this story a lot, but I've never fingered her before, so I'm going to finger her tonight. [Laughter] Terry and Dorothy and their kids came up and spent some time with us in the weekend after Thanksgiving. And we were all playing and having a big time. And little Mary looked up at me, and

she said, "How old are you anyway?" [Laughter] And I said, "Well, I'm 53." And she said, "That's a lot." [Laughter] And I had to admit that it's a lot. [Laughter]

And I just want to echo something Dick Gephardt said. Never in my lifetime—never, not once, ever—has our country had the combination of economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence with the absence of an internal crisis or an external threat. We have, in other words, the best chance we have ever had—maybe in our history, but certainly in my "that's-a-lot" 53 years—to shape the future of our dreams for our kids.

Are we going to give all of them a world-class education, or not? Are we going to take the burden of the baby boomers' retirement off their shoulders by fixing Social Security and Medicare, or not? Are we going to help all these working people who aren't as fortunate as those of us who can be here tonight balance work and family so they can succeed at home raising their kids and succeed at work, or not? Are we going to prove that we can grow the economy and preserve the environment, or not? Are we going to prove that we can continue to integrate the world's economies and expand trade but put a more human face on it so that everybody is benefited, or not? Is America going to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom, or not?

I'll just give you one example, and I hope you agree with me. I'm really grateful that in 1999 the United States led our NATO Alliance and all of our European Allies in stopping cold the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and letting over 800,000 people go home. I'm grateful for that.

The other day I heard one of the candidates, prominent candidates for President on the other side said, "Well, boy, if he got elected, they surely wouldn't be using American military resources to fool around in trivial, insignificant places." I think standing against ethnic cleansing, racial cleansing, religious cleansing, standing up for human rights is not trivial. I also think, to my Republican friends, well, it's good economics in the long run. It's morally right, but it happens to be good economics; because if you put the fire

out when it starts to burn, before the house has burned down, you're way ahead.

But these are big questions. And what I want you to do for the next year is not just to come to these parties where we're all preaching to the saved, but every one of you has a span of influence, a circle of friends, people that you meet in nonpolitical context. And you ought to tell them, first of all, that 7 years ago—people actually don't remember; it's been so good so long people don't remember—you've got to remind them that in 1992 we were facing economic distress, social decline, political division, and government was discredited. And now we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years. And the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer, and we've put aside more land than any administrations in the history of America, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We've got 150,000 young people who have served our country in AmeriCorps, and 90 percent of our kids are immunized for the first time against serious illness, and over 2 million children now have gotten health insurance under our Children's Health Insurance Program. And that's just half the story—and that we are asking the right questions, and we're the people to answer them for the future. They need to remember what it was like, what we've done, but, more important, what we think this election is about and why we're all running.

I'll tell you, I knew Dick Gephardt before I became President. He was my neighbor. He'd been to the Governor's Mansion to see me in 1988, when he was running for President. We were both less health conscious then—remember, we sat and ate french fries from McDonald's. [*Laughter*] Dick spoke at this Democratic event where he was competing with an in-State basketball rivalry on television that night and he still did a good job. And he didn't eat, and so we sat in my big kitchen at the Governor's Mansion, and

we stayed up half the night talking. He is a profoundly good human being.

The thing that I am so impressed about is that he continues to grow every year as a leader. You know, once you reach a certain age and you realize that physically you're not going to get any stronger and you've got to keep working just to keep up, it's easy to stop growing personally. It's easy to stop growing in your interpersonal skills, in your leadership skills, in what you know and what you think about. This guy just keeps on going and keeps on growing. He has been indefatigable. And I trust him with the future of this country.

So I want you all to think about this. And I want you to be able to go out, every one of you, and say, "Remember what it was like? Here is what they've done. Here is what they're going to do." Elections are determined by three things: the quality of the candidates; whether you've got enough money to be heard—it's okay if the other guys have more, you just have to have enough; and, third, and most important, once those two baseline things are satisfied is what do the voters think the election is about, what is the subject of the election?

If the subject of the election is whether America is going to use this once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet the big challenges of the future, we will win because you've given us the resources to be heard and he's found the candidates to run. And believe me, you owe it to these little kids in this room and people like them all across this country.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Terence and Dorothy McAuliffe and their daughter Mary; and former Representative Jane Harman. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Excerpts of an Interview With Peter Jennings of ABC News

December 16, 1999

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Mr. Jennings. This room, sir, this fireplace and others in the White House obviously remind me of President Roosevelt. His relationship with the public was of such a