

he told a joke or two, and we took a nice picture. But I care about the America and the world my children and grandchildren are going to live in, and I want us to use this election to take what Theodore Roosevelt called almost 100 years ago, the long look ahead.”

Thank you very much.

Audience member. One or two questions.

Judicial Nominations

Audience members. [*Inaudible*—so much about the future and one of the reasons I think everybody is here is because of their concern. And one of the key things that keeps coming up in this election is not about the next 4 years. I think it has a great effect on the Federal judiciary for the next 30 years. I don’t know the statistics, but I know the Supreme Court is basically—I just wondered if you could comment on this.

The President. I think a lot of people have not given much thought to this, but when you vote for—now, this is a self-interested statement I’m about to make. When you vote for the Senate—[*laughter*—and when you vote for President, one of the things you should know is, I have appointed a very large number of judges. In spite of the fact that I think the Republican Senate has been way too slow in considering our nominees, I’ve appointed more than 40 percent of all the judges in the city today but only two members of the Supreme Court.

Most people believe there will be at least two, and maybe as many as four members of the Supreme Court retire in the next 4 years. That means—and there are only two groups of people that matter then—the President who nominates, and the Senate who confirms.

And all these people have been pretty honest, I must say. The candidates have been pretty honest. Governor Bush said the other day that the two people on the Supreme Court that he most admires were Clarence Thomas and Justice Scalia. That’s what he said. So he’s sending you a signal. He said, “I want you to know that so you’ll know who I’ll appoint to the Supreme Court if I get elected.” And you have to assume—I can tell you that the people who are in the Presi-

dent’s party are more likely to vote to confirm his nominees, whether or not they agree with him.

So you need to think about that. What do you want in a Supreme Court judge? Do you care if they repeal *Roe v. Wade*, or not? Do you want them to? Do you not want them to? It’s a big issue. And nobody is talking about it yet, but you should be aware that this is not an idle, sort of sideline conversation. This is a real, significant possibility. And so it’s something you should think about. And there’s not just that, there are all the civil rights cases and a lot of other issues that are big, big issues. So you should know that.

The power of the President—I really tried to—and my judgments were much less politically controversial than previous judges, both Democrat and Republican, because I focused on getting people who had good skills and were highly regarded by the American Bar Association, even though there were more women and more minorities in my appointees than anybody in the past, they also had the highest ratings. So I tried to keep it out of politics. But it could get very political very fast, and the public would be making a mistake if they didn’t take into account these things as they voted.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts John and Margo Castsimatidis; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; Sanford I. Weill, chief executive officer, Citigroup; Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

January 13, 2000

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

Attached is a report to the Congress on cost-sharing arrangements, as required by Condition 4(A) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical

Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Reporting a Certification Required
by the Ratification Resolution of the
Chemical Weapons Convention**

January 13, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify that:

In connection with Condition (9), Protection of Advanced Biotechnology, the legitimate commercial activities and interests of chemical, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical firms in the United States are not being significantly harmed by the limitations of the Convention on access to, and production of, those chemicals and toxins listed in Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.

**Remarks on Airline Safety and an
Exchange With Reporters**

January 14, 2000

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I asked you here today so

I could make some remarks about airline safety. But in view of an item that was in the morning news, I would like to also say a few words about the efforts we're making to ensure prescription drug coverage for millions of our senior citizens and disabled Americans who rely on Medicare.

Last year I proposed a comprehensive plan to modernize Medicare to meet the challenges of the 21st century, to extend the life of the Trust Fund and add a much-needed voluntary option for prescription drug coverage. And as you know, there's been some considerable resistance up until now from both the drug companies and from some in Congress.

Today's news that the drug companies say they are ready to work with us on providing affordable optional drug coverage and making sure older people have access to the highest quality medications developed is a very good first step. Now, what we need is positive actions from the drug company and positive action in Congress, not just on the benefit but on the efforts to strengthen and extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund.

I hope that this is a good beginning of what can be a very good year for the American people.

Airline Safety

Now let me begin my remarks by welcoming and thanking the people who are here with me, beginning with our FAA Administrator, Jane Garvey; Deputy Secretary of Transportation Mort Downey; American Airlines Chairman Don Carty; Delta Airlines CEO Leo Mullen; first vice president of the Airline Pilots Association International, Captain Dennis Dolan; Allied Pilots Association President Richard LaVoy; and Mark DeAngelis, the Aviation Safety Action Program representative for the Transport Workers Union.

Three years ago I asked Vice President Gore to lead a Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, looking at how to make our skies as safe as they can possibly be. Already, there is less than one fatal crash for every one million commercial flights. But we know we can do better still. Any accident, any death in the air is still one too many.