

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on Partial Birth Abortion

June 28, 2000

I am pleased with the Supreme Court's decision today in *Stenberg v. Carhart* striking down a Nebraska statute that banned so-called partial birth abortions. The Court's decision is consistent with my past vetoes of similar legislation. I will continue to veto any legislation restricting late-term abortions that lacks a health exception or otherwise unduly burdens a woman's right to choose. A woman's right to choose must include the right to choose a medical procedure that will not endanger her life or health. Today's decision recognizes this principle and marks an important victory for a woman's freedom of choice.

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision on Restriction of Protests Outside Health Care Facilities

June 28, 2000

I am pleased that the Supreme Court today, in *Hill v. Colorado*, upheld a Colorado statute balancing a person's right to protest certain medical procedures against another person's right to obtain medical treatment free from harassment, fear, and intimidation. The Colorado law was enacted in response to a real need to ensure safe access to medical treatment in light of increasing obstruction, harassment, and violence in front of health care facilities. To preserve a woman's right to choose, we must protect access to reproductive health services. That is why I championed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE), a Federal statute that protects women and doctors from violence at reproductive health clinics.

NOTE: The statement referred to Public Law No. 103-259, approved May 26, 1994.

Statement on House Action on Private Insurance Prescription Coverage Legislation

June 28, 2000

Tonight, in a partisan vote, the Republican leadership succeeded in passing a flawed, unworkable private insurance prescription benefit that provides more political cover than insurance coverage for our Nation's seniors. If this unworkable private prescription drug benefit passes the Congress, I will veto it. The legislation was designed to benefit the companies who make prescription drugs, not the older Americans and people with disabilities who need to take them. It puts special interests above the public interests. I urge the Congress to work across party lines and develop a bipartisan bill that ensures an affordable, available, and meaningful Medicare prescription drug benefit option for all seniors.

Remarks at a Reception for Senatorial Candidate Brian Schweitzer

June 28, 2000

Thank you. I'll tell you what, I'm glad he clarified that. [*Laughter*] He got into that next husband deal—I thought there were going to be three surprised people here—[*laughter*—me, Hillary, and what's-her-name. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, let me say, first of all, I want to thank all of you for coming, and thank Beth again for her incredible generosity. She and Ron have been so wonderful to open their homes to people who share our causes. Unlike maybe most of the people in this room, I've actually been to Montana several times. In 1985 we had one of our best family vacations ever, there. And I think it may be the most beautiful place on the Earth. It is certainly one of the most magnificent. And it deserves to have a magnificent, big, strong Senator, and we're about to get one here.

I loved the place. I felt immediately at home. It's so much like the place I grew up and the people I grew up with. But I have to tell you, this thing that Brian did with the prescription drugs and taking the people to Canada and then to Mexico, it really painted a picture of what we're up against.

And what I'd like to say is something you all know, but this is a very important election. And maybe I can say it with greater authority since I'm not on the ballot. There are profound differences between the two parties, starting with our candidates for President, our candidates for the Senate, our candidates for the House.

And the most important thing that most voters need to know about who is probably right, is that only the Democrats want you to know what the real differences are. There was a great article in the newspaper the other day. You can't believe everything you read in the press, I know, but since our Republican friends didn't deny this, we can assume it's true. They have actually hired pollsters. They're so afraid of this prescription drug issue, they have hired pollsters to tell them what words and phrases they should use to convince you that they're for giving affordable prescription drugs to our seniors, even though they're not.

That's what was so bizarre about this. They didn't hire pollsters to convince them how to talk about something they're for; they hired pollsters to try to tell them how to talk about something they're not for. I never saw anything like it in my life.

Now, just last week, or a couple of days ago, anyway, the United States Senate voted on this issue. And on a party line vote, they voted against the position that he and I hold. If we change Senate seats in Montana, that will be a switch of two. They'll lose one, and we'll gain one. And I could give you example after example after example.

But let me say, all over America and rural parts of the country, over half of our elderly senior citizens don't have any kind of medical coverage for medicine. If we were creating a Medicare program today, of course we'd have a prescription drug coverage. If I asked you to go in that room with a pencil and piece of paper and design a medical program to ensure all the seniors in America what would

it cover, every one of you would put prescription drugs down on it.

The only reason there is no prescription drug coverage in Medicare is, in 1965 health care was about doctors and hospitals. There had not been the pharmacological revolution we had seen. Prescription drugs were not used basically to keep people out of the hospital—which saves money over the long run, I might add—and to lengthen and enhance the quality of life. And the only reason it hasn't happened since then is every year but one, until this administration, the Government was in debt, and we couldn't afford to take on new programs.

Well, now we're looking at a \$1.5 trillion surplus over the next 10 years, after we save all of your Social Security and Medicare taxes to pay the debt down and stabilize Social Security and Medicare. And for roughly 12½ percent of that—15 percent, something like that—we can provide prescription drugs at an affordable rate on a voluntary basis to all the seniors in this country. And we ought to do it.

And you know, this has been a great week for America. We announced a \$211 billion surplus in the budget this year, the biggest one we ever had. I will now have had the privilege of paying off about \$400 billion of the national debt when I leave office. And even more profoundly important, we announced the sequencing of the human genome. But this is just the beginning, mapping these 3 billion genes, looking at all the different patterns. It's just the beginning.

And what will happen is, we will discover the genetic flaws that give people Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes, every different kind of cancer, the things that make some people more prone to heart disease and others more prone to strokes. And the more we discover, the more important medicine is going to be, and the more we're going to be able to lengthen life and increase the quality of life.

Anybody that lives to be 65 in America today has got a life expectancy of 82. That's stunning. I predict to you that children born within a decade will be born with a life expectancy of 85 to 90. This is stunning. Within 20 years, children will be born with a life expectancy of 100. Your body is built to last

about 120 years. All of us that don't, like me—[laughter]—do things like, too much stress, or we don't eat right, or whatever—this is going to change everything.

And it is, I think, a stern test of our judgment and our character what we do with this prosperity we've got. And I think one of the things that we have to do is take care of the aging of America, the baby boom generation is getting older. And we can't do it unless we do the prescription drug program.

You know my first love is education. I've worked hard on it. There is plenty of money left to do education. Should we give some of the money back to the people in a tax cut? Absolutely, there is plenty of money left to do that. But we have no higher priority, in my judgment, than making sure that we have done right by the seniors in this country and that we have paved the way with the prescription drug program. This man symbolizes that. There are a thousand other issues that we'll be voting on.

But you just remember this. When you talk to people about the elections, say, "Well, you know, I went to this party for this fellow, Schweitzer. He's from Montana, and he's doing these crazy things for these people to prove to them we're getting the shaft on prescription drugs for seniors. But what it says is, he wants to do something with our prosperity. He wants to do something for people who need help, not just for those of us who can afford to come to an event like this. And he wants to do something to make America a better, stronger, more united place."

If he wins, it will go like a rifle shot across America. And if we don't succeed in getting this done between now and November, because they think their phrases that the pollster gives them will substitute for deeds, you can be sure if he gets elected, it will happen, and it will be a much better country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:08 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Beth and Ron Dozoretz. Mr. Schweitzer is a candidate for U.S. Senate from Montana.

Remarks at a New Democrat Network Dinner

June 28, 2000

Thank you very much. I have here in my hand a Mont Blanc pen left on this platform, I presume by Simon,—[laughter]—who could not afford one of these when he worked for me. [Laughter] I am really proud of you—[laughter]—and I thank you, you've been great. This is really wonderful.

Now, I don't know how well the rest of you know Senator Lieberman. I think I know Senator Lieberman reasonably well—30 years worth of reasonably well. And normally he's so laid-back and so buttoned-down and so controlled. And that's the image of the whole New Democrat crowd. But when he gets in front of a New Democrat group, he becomes positively ebullient. [Laughter] I mean, you could mistake him for Chris Dodd up here, the way he was talking. [Laughter] It was amazing.

Listen, this deal he did tonight is a big deal. Getting the disclosure of these secret committees is a big deal for America, and we thank you. This is great. And this could really influence the outcome of some of the elections this year, and more importantly, it could ratify a principle that we all, in both parties, say we believe in, which is full disclosure. So now we're going to be given our chance, and it's a great thing.

Let me—I thank all the rest of you for coming. I want to say, Joe, of all the nice things you said about me, you know, when we started in '93, we carried the economic plan by a vote—just a vote. As Al Gore says, whenever he voted, we won—in both Houses. And I want to pay special tribute to those of you who were there then and who were part of the whole idea base of the New Democratic movement. And I want to say a special word of appreciation to my friend and neighbor of many years Dave McCurdy, who was a big part of that. I thank you so much. Thank you.

We have all these people running for office today. I guess I want to say a few words about all of them. And I'll come back to that. But let me begin by saying that I hope this group will stay together after this election. And I