debt"—we had quadrupled our national debt in the 12 years before our side showed up, and now we're going to pay off $400 billion of our debt before I leave office, and I'd like to get this country out of debt so these kids will always have low interest rates and be able to afford a college loan, a car loan, a home mortgage, and we'll be able to keep growing this economy. It's a huge difference. It's huge.

And I could go through issue after issue—the hate crimes legislation, the environmental position, in the Presidential race, the appointments—two to four people to the Supreme Court. Did you see all these decisions that came out this week? Five to four, six to three. There are going to be two to four appointments in the Supreme Court. Either one of them will change the balance of the Supreme Court—either one. The question is, how do you want it to go?

So here you've got this guy who is, I think, a really stand-up person. There are so many times in the last 8 years when it would have been easy for him to take a dive and call me on the phone and say, "Now listen, man, you're my buddy, but I've got a problem" — [*laughter*]—"and my district is not like the whole rest of America, you know; it's rural. And I've got all these farmers, and they think I'm a little too, you know, maybe close to you anyway. I don't know." [*Laughter*] I mean, just time after time, when we really needed somebody to stand up, he stood up. So I'm glad you're here helping him. But I want you to leave here committed to help shape this political environment.

This election is going to be fine. The American people normally get it right, if they have enough information and enough time to digest it. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here. We're the oldest big democracy in the whole history of the planet. And other people think it's a pretty good idea because over the last 8 or 9 years, we've had more people living under democratic governments than nondemocratic governments for the first time in all of human history, around the world.

Russia, where she is from, they just had their first transition from one democratically elected President to another in a thousand years. This works if people have enough information and enough time to digest it. So I have absolute confidence in the outcome of this election if the people have enough information and enough opportunity to digest it. But you've got to help that.

The only problem here is, good times are full of danger as well as opportunity. So you sort of slide along here and think, well, there is not really much difference; these two guys seem pretty nice; our side had it for 8 years, maybe we should give their side a chance—you know, just sort of, blah, blah, blah, I've heard all this stuff. [*Laughter*]

And I'm telling you, you just remember, if people ask you about the election, you say, "It is really important, and I want you to take it seriously." If you meet a Republican, an independent, anybody, you tell them that. In a lifetime you may get one chance—one chance—to set a course in times as good as this. Even the kids here may never see another time like this. And then the second thing you tell them is, there are real differences, and you should listen to both sides. And then the third thing you tell them is, however—a key to who you'll agree with is—only the Democrats really want you to know what the differences are. And the final thing is, a guy like Sanford Bishop, he can always make all the difference.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Fernal and Margo Briggs; Ada Hollingsworth, owner, A&A Travel Services; former Georgia State Representative Calvin Smyre; former Representative Ron Dellums; former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown; and Senator John McCain. Representative Bishop is a candidate for reelection in Georgia's 2d Congressional District.

Executive Order 13161—Establishment of the Presidential Medal of Valor for Public Safety Officers

June 29, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is ordered:

Section 1. The Presidential Medal of Valor for Public Safety Officers (Medal) is

established for the purpose of recognizing those public safety officers adjudged to have shown extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty in the exercise of their official duties. As used in this section, the term "public safety officer" means a person serving a public agency with or without compensation:

(1) as a law enforcement officer, including police, correctional, probation, or parole officers;

(2) as a firefighter or emergency responder; and

(3) who is employed by the Government of the United States, any State of the United States, any officially recognized elective body within a State of the United States, or any Federally recognized tribal organization.

Sec. 2. Eligible recipients generally will be recommended to the President by the Attorney General by April 1 of each year. Pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 136–137, the President designates May 15 of each year as "Peace Officers Memorial Day" and the week in which it falls as "Police Week." Presentation of the Medal shall occur at an appropriate time during the commemoration of Police Week, as far as is practicable.

Sec. 3. The President may select for the Medal up to ten persons annually from among those persons recommended to the President by the Attorney General. In submitting recommendations to the President, the Attorney General may consult with experts representing all segments of the public safety sector, including representatives from law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency services.

Sec. 4. Those chosen for recognition shall receive a medal and a certificate, the designs of which shall be submitted by the Attorney General for the President's approval no later than December 1, 2000. The medal and certificate shall be prepared by the Department of Justice.

Sec. 5. The Medal may be given posthumously.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
June 29, 2000.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., July 3, 2000]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 30, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on July 5.

Remarks to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 30, 2000

Thank you. Well, you know, I was still a little sleepy when I got here today. [*Laughter*] I'm pumped. Thank you very much. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Mr. President McEntee, congratulations on your reelection. Your job has some advantages over mine—no term limits, no opponents. Not bad.

I'm delighted to be here with all your officers—Will Lucy, it's good to see you again, and all the AFSCME officers. I do want to say a special word of appreciation to the vice presidents from Pennsylvania who are hosting you—Edward Keller, Henry Nicholas, Dave Fillman. And I want to acknowledge in the audience a good friend of AFSCME's down in Washington whom I brought home to Pennsylvania with me today, Congressman Joe Hoeffel. Give him a big hand. [*Applause*] Joe, thank you for coming with me.

Let me just say at the outset, I know everything I'm going to say today will not be news to you. It's almost like preaching to the saved. But the most important thing that I can say today is a simple thank you. I am so grateful for the support you've given me and for the work we've done together. Thank you.

It is fitting that one of America's greatest labor unions is meeting here in Philadelphia in the millennial year. This city is rich in labor history. In 1774 the very first Continental Congress met in Carpenter's Hall, which was built by the very first trade guild in America. In 1792 the shoemakers here in Philadelphia formed the first local craft union for collective bargaining over 200 years ago. And just as you are in a city with deep labor roots, you are looking at a President who feels he has deep roots in AFSCME.