fundamental interests without also winning the right to say they have stuck it to the Palestinians. I believe there is, and we're going to explore how we might persuade them, all of them, that there is and where we go from here.

And I hope that just this kind of thing I've been talking about will spark a whole range of "oh" articles in the press, commentators on the TV programs, other people talking and thinking this way, trying to be innovative and open and—you know, I realize the incredible pressure these people were under in even having this discussion. That is, in the end, why I realized we couldn't get it done in 2 weeks. You've got to get used to talking about something for a little bit before you can then entertain how you can create an edifice that you hadn't previously imagined. And I think we'll be able to do it.

Q. How long are you going to wait before you give it another shot?

The President. Well, it depends. I can't answer that. I've tried to make the judgments here for 8 years based on what I thought would aid the process, and I can't yet tell, Mark, [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio] what would be most in aid of the process. I just can't tell yet.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ed McMahon, spokesperson, Publishers' Clearinghouse Sweepstakes; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report of the Federal Labor Relations Authority

July 26, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 701 of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95–454; 5 U.S.C. 7104(e)), I have the pleasure of transmitting to you the Twenty-first Annual Report of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for Fiscal Year 1999.

The report includes information on the cases heard and decisions rendered by the Federal Labor Relations Authority, the General Counsel of the Authority, and the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 26, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Terry L. Lierman

July 26, 2000

Thank you very much. Let me say to all of you, I thank you for being here. And I want to thank the organizers of this event for holding it in this wonderful museum. It's one of Hillary's and my favorite places in all of Washington, DC, and I hope you'll always support it and bring some people back here. This is a great thing for the women of America, this museum, and I'm delighted to be here.

I want to thank Governor Glendening for what he said and for his sterling leadership. Maryland, in so many ways, has led the country in education and health policy and so many other things since Parris Glendening has been Governor and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend has been Lieutenant Governor. I am so proud of them. I have been to Maryland more than any other State in America the last 8 years, to highlight reforms at the State level that work. And it's a real tribute to him. I'm grateful to him.

I also want to thank the Members of Congress who are here and those who are gone. I know Steny Hoyer was here; I heard him, with his booming voice, speaking when I came in and started taking pictures with a few of you. And I thank him and Al Wynn. And thank you, Jim Moran, for being here. Thank you, Elijah Cummings, for being here. And thank you, Patrick Kennedy, for being here, out there in the crowd, just one of the folks, like all the Kennedys. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you being here. Good for you.

Patrick has been the chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which means he has to go out and make sure all the House Members have enough money to get on television. So he's

just out here checking you all out. He'll probably call you all tomorrow for somebody else. [*Laughter*] But you've done a great job. Thank you, Patrick.

Finally, I want to say a word of appreciation and admiration and thanks to Senator Paul Sarbanes—I think not only one of the brightest but one of the most wise people in the United States Congress. You are very lucky to have him as your Senator. I'm glad to see him and Christina here tonight. Thank you.

And I would like to thank Terry and his entire family, because this is a family endeavor, for their commitment to this race and to the future of our country. It is not easy to run for Congress today, still less to run against an incumbent and to run for a clear reason that overrides his or anyone else's individual interests. And I admire him for doing it, for taking it on, and for doing it with such gusto. So I thank you, and I thank your family.

Now, it is true, as all of you know, that I've been up most of the last 15 days. This will be the first night in 15 nights that I've been to bed before 2 o'clock in the morning, and the most of the nights we were at Camp David, we went to bed at 3 or 4. The last 2 nights we were all up until 5 o'clock in the morning. Somewhere in the middle—I can't remember exactly when—I flew to Okinawa and back. [*Laughter*] So I'm just barely here.

But I'm honored to be here. I'm very grateful to the people of Maryland for voting for me and Al Gore twice, for giving us a chance to serve, and I thank you for that. I just want to say two or three things.

First of all, this is a profoundly important election. Ninety-two was a big election because the country was in trouble. And the people voted for me and gave me a chance, even though most of them probably, when they first heard about me running, had the same reaction Abe Pollin did. [*Laughter*] I'll never forget President Bush referring to me as the Governor of a small southern State. [*Laughter*] And when I ran, I was so naive, I thought it was a compliment. [*Laughter*] And you know something? I still do.

But it didn't take rocket science to figure out we needed to make a change in the country. But now—it's interesting, a lot of these surveys show that people don't know if there is a real difference between the Vice President and the Republican candidate's economic policy or the two parties—what's the deal here?

And the first thing I have to drum home is that this is a really important election. And a lot of people won't believe that because things seem to be going well. You say, "Well, how can it be so important? The economy is strong. We've got a surplus. All the social indicators are going well: The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in 30 years; the welfare rolls have been cut in half; the crime rate is dropping; teen pregnancy rate is dropping; drug use among young people is dropping. What's the big deal here? We have no internal crisis or pressing external threat. The United States is involved in making peace around the world and all that."

I'll tell you what the big deal is. In my lifetime we have never had a moment where we had this much prosperity, this much social progress, and this much national self-confidence. But the world is changing very fast, and there are all these huge challenges and opportunities out there. And for the first time in my adult lifetime, we're actually free to talk about what we might do to meet them, to build the future of our dreams for the children here. And I'm so glad so many kids came to this.

So the reason it's so important is, I don't know when we'll ever have another chance like this. It may be another 35 years. It may be another 50 years. And for a democracy, it's normally quite difficult to take on big challenges, except when you're under the gun. So I honestly believe how a nation deals with this kind of prosperity and all the opportunities it presents in a rapidly changing world is just as stern a test of our character, our values, and our judgment as how we dealt with adversity 8 years ago. And it may be harder.

There is not a person in this audience tonight over 30 years old who can't remember once in your life when you made a big mistake, not because things were going so bad but because things were going so well that

you thought there was no penalty to the failure to concentrate. But make no mistake, this is a huge election.

The second thing I want to say to you is that there are big differences—huge. And I'll talk a little about some of them in a minute.

And the third thing I want to say is, only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. [*Laughter*] What does that tell you about who you ought to vote for? [*Laughter*] It beats anything I ever saw. My wife's opponent up in New York is running ads with me and Senator Moynihan in them; running ads saying, "I voted for a patients' bill of rights." The operative word there is "a," as opposed to "the." And it's happening all over the country, just blur, blur, blur, take advantage of the era of good feelings, outspend them, and smile them to death and hope nobody ever figures out what the differences are.

There are real differences. And I'll just start with economic policy. Today I announced that since this Congress began last year, the Republicans have, piece by piece, passed tax cuts equal to the whole projected surplus over the next 10 years—the whole projected surplus. That's before we spend any money over and above bare inflation, before we deal with any emergency, before they spend any of their spending priorities. And let me remind you, this is projected. And their platform calls for even bigger tax increases. Now, what they want to tell you is, "Hey, this economy is so strong, you couldn't mess it up with a stick of dynamite. It's your money. I'm going to give it back to you." That's their line.

Our line is, "We got where we are being fiscally responsible. We want to keep paying down the debt. We want to have enough money to invest in the education of our children, in science and technology, in the environment and health care, and we'll give you a tax cut to educate your kids, for child care, for long-term care, for elderly and disabled people, to help people save for retirement, to help especially lower income working people with a lot of kids." But we're not going to tell you, even in an election year, we can give you more than is prudent because we've got to keep the economy strong. And if you keep interest rates low, which we'll do and they won't, one percent lower interest rates over the next decade is worth $250 billion in lower home mortgages—$250 billion—and nearly $50 billion more in lower car payments and in college loan payments.

So here's my pitch to you: If you got one of those letters in the mail from Ed McMahon—[*laughter*]—and it says, you know how it says on the envelope, you may have won $10 million. Would you go out the next day and spend the $10 million, based on the envelope? Well, if you would, you ought to be for them. If not, you better stick with us and keep this economy going.

There couldn't be any bigger difference in economic policy than there is in this year. They actually want to go—they think now that we have gotten the budget balanced and now we've run a surplus and we've paid $300 billion or $400 billion off the national debt, that you'll be willing to go back to what they did for 12 years. That's the deal here. That's what this election is about on economic policy. It could hardly be a starker difference. And you have to decide. And then you've got to talk to other people about it.

Then there is a big difference in social policy. We want to have a responsible gun safety approach in America. We want to strengthen the Brady bill and close the gun show loophole. We want to stop the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. We want child safety locks on all the guns in America, like Maryland already requires. And Vice President Gore and I believe that people that buy handguns ought to have a photo I.D. license, just like a car license, to prove you passed a gun safety check and a background check. That's what I believe. They honestly don't believe that. I'm convinced they didn't just sell out to the NRA; they just agree with them. You don't have to say anything bad about them; they just don't believe that.

Now, we've tried it their way. We've tried it our way. And gun crime has dropped 35 percent since we adopted the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, and a half a million people were denied the right to buy handguns because they had a criminal background problem or some other problem in their background that made them manifestly unfit. You have to decide.

The NRA says, if the other crowd wins the White House, they'll have an office there. That's what they said. That's not a negative campaign ad. That's what they said.

That's another new feature you'll notice in this election. This year the Republicans, who pioneered for 20 years negative campaigns, smashing us all to bits and telling everybody how terrible we were and how there was nothing good about us—they now have sworn off negative campaigns. Furthermore, their definition of a negative campaign is if you say how they voted. [*Laughter*] If you tell people how they—how dare you do such a thing. How can you be so mean and unfair as to tell people how we voted and what we said in the primary, when we hoped no general election voters were looking? It's a big deal.

Look, we're laughing, having a good time. But this is a big deal. This is about people's lives. Yes, we've got the lowest crime rate in a long time, and yes, I'm proud it has dropped every year. But this country is not near safe enough. You know it's not. I know it's not. And it's important.

There is a huge difference in health care policy. Whether we're going to provide Medicare for the baby boom generation without bankrupting our kids, whether we're going to provide a real, affordable prescription drug benefit for all the seniors in our country who need it. The bill that they passed won't work, and even if it did, it would leave more than half the seniors who need the drug coverage behind. It's just crazy. It's not right.

And I could just go on and on and on. There are real, significant differences here. The hate crimes legislation, should we have it or not? Employment and nondiscrimination, should we have it or not? It's a huge issue.

The final thing I want to say is that a lot of you talked to me tonight about the Middle East peace process. And I don't want to say any more than I've already said, except that it's nowhere near over, and I think it was a very important 2 weeks. The parties had never before really come to grips in an official, face-to-face way with the profound differences in the way they imagined their future and the profound similarities. But you should not be disheartened.

But here's what I want to tell you about that. It is the most visible and powerful example in the world today about how we define our differences and our commonality. You all know that one of the most profound differences is over what the future of Jerusalem should be. It's interesting, isn't it, that the three great monotheistic religions of the world basically grew out of the same soil and look at Jerusalem as their Holy City.

Now, if all these people, billions of them now in the world that believe there is just one God who created us all, and they understand that reality in slightly different ways, how can it be that what is different about them is more important than their common humanity as children of God?

I say that to those of you who saw the accounts over the weekend—I'm telling you, these are very impressive people on these negotiating teams. They're very impressive people. And you thought, "Well, gosh, I'd wish they'd worked out—I wonder why they couldn't work that out. I wonder why people ever can't get over their differences to what they have in common."

You know, why couldn't the Irish and the Catholics in Northern Ireland get over it for so long? It's a little-bitty place, smaller than Israel, even. Why did all the Orthodox Christians and the Catholics and the Muslims in the Balkans bloody themselves in Bosnia and Kosovo and before in Croatia? Why do these things happen?

Well, why do we ever have racial discrimination in America? Why do we still have hate crimes? Why does some guy go nuts in the Middle West and kill the African-American former basketball coach at Northwestern and then shoot a young, Korean Christian walking out of church? And why did a crazy guy shoot a bunch of Jewish kids going to their community center in L.A., and then kill a Filipino postal worker because he was Asian and a Federal employee? Why did Matthew Shepard get stretched out on a rack?

Now, the point I'm trying to make is this—and I'm not accusing the Republicans of this. But one of the things that I'm proudest of is that the Democratic Party is the more inclusive party in America. We are. I was so proud of a man that I think a lot of, actually—a Republican United States Senator who gave

a speech for the hate crimes legislation, using the parable of what Jesus said to the woman who was caught in sin and brought to him for stoning. And he said to let he who is among you without sin cast the first stone. The whole Senate was practically weeping when this guy spoke. It was so moving.

But why is that? Because they were surprised that a member of his party and his wing of his party would do such a noble thing. It was a noble thing he did. But why were they surprised? Because they expect us—the American people expect us to stand up for inclusion for people, without regard to their background, their race, their religion, their sexual orientation, or their income. They expect us to stand up for ordinary people and the left-behind and the broken and the vulnerable. And I'm proud of that.

I tell people this all the time. You ought to be for the Democrats this year because our economic policy is right, and it's no time to reverse it. You ought to be for us because we'll try to include everybody, including those who aren't part of our economic prosperity. You ought to be for us because we will think of the future and we want the baby boomers to be able to retire without bankrupting their children and grandchildren. You ought to be for us because we have a good education policy and a good environmental policy.

But the most important thing of all is, we really do want to take everybody along for the ride. And in the end, as I have just learned over 15 hard days, that is the most important thing of all.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:27 p.m. at the Museum of Women in the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Sarbanes' wife, Christina; Abe Pollin, owner, National Basketball Association Washington Wizards, and chairman of Mr. Lierman's campaign; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; and Ed McMahon, spokesperson, Publishers' Clearinghouse Sweepstakes. Mr. Lierman is a candidate for Maryland's Eighth Congressional District.

Statement on Signing the Griffith Project Prepayment and Conveyance Act

July 26, 2000

Today I have signed into law S. 986, the "Griffith Project Prepayment and Conveyance Act," a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Griffith Project to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA).

This legislation is consistent with Administration policy of transferring certain facilities to private water districts where it is more efficient for the nonfederal entity to manage the project. I am pleased that the Congress addressed many Administration concerns with earlier versions of this legislation. For example, the bill clarifies questions regarding the lands to be transferred and eligibility for future benefits for Bureau of Reclamation programs.

I am disappointed that the bill directs rather than authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to convey the facilities of the Project. My Administration believes that prior to transferring title, the Secretary should conduct a meaningful National Environmental Policy Act analysis so that the Department, the Congress, and the public can fully understand the impacts of the proposed transfer, its alternatives, and potential mitigation measures. My Administration continues to oppose such mandatory provisions in transfer bills. However, because of the cooperative efforts with the SNWA and the progress made to date in the environmental review, the Department of the Interior indicates that it believes that the process can be satisfactorily completed with regard to this Project.

In signing S. 986, I state my interpretation that section 5(c) of the bill, which provides that nothing in the Act shall transfer or affect Federal ownership, rights, or interest in Lake Mead National Recreation Area associated lands, nor affect the authorities of the National Park Service to manage the Area, read together with section 3(b)(2), makes clear that no interests in real property would transfer to the SNWA other than the right-of-way