

Week Ending Friday, August 25, 2000

**Statement on Signing Legislation
Designating Wilson Creek in North
Carolina as a Part of the National
Wild and Scenic Rivers System**

August 18, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1749, an Act "To designate Wilson Creek in Avery and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System."

Wilson Creek possesses all the remarkable values that distinguish the free-flowing rivers of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System: exceptional scenery; recreational opportunities; fish, wildlife, and botanical communities; and historic and cultural sites. The designation will protect and conserve Wilson Creek and provide continued opportunities for fishing, white-water boating, swimming, and hiking.

I applaud the efforts of the North Carolina congressional delegation along with the County Commissioners and residents of Avery and Caldwell Counties who have worked to preserve and protect this remarkable resource. Their individual and collective efforts have preserved for the people of the State of North Carolina and all Americans a natural treasure that, together with the other rivers of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, will continue to add immeasurably to the quality of our environment and our national life.

Designation of Wilson Creek as a wild, scenic, and recreational river will finalize a nearly 20-year conservation initiative and will guarantee for future generations that the river and its values are conserved. I am pleased to sign this legislation, which will permanently protect Wilson Creek as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

NOTE: H.R. 1749, approved August 18, was assigned Public Law No. 106-261. This item was

not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Remarks at the Franklin, Essex, and
Clinton County Democratic Picnic in
Saranac Lake, New York**

August 18, 2000

Thank you. Well, let me thank all of you for coming out tonight. I thank the mayor and all of our chairs. And Phil Lalande and Anne Tubby, thank you for being with us tonight.

I think Hillary just about said it all, don't you? I thought that was great.

I want to say a few things and then ask you something from a little different perspective. First of all, I want to thank all the people of New York State for voting twice in 1992 and 1996 for Bill Clinton and Al Gore, and I'm very grateful to you. And I want to say a special word of thanks to you for 1996, when we carried 52 of the State's counties, including Franklin, Essex, and Clinton Counties, by big margins, and I thank you. Now that we know you can do it, I hope you'll do the same thing for Hillary and Al Gore and Joe Lieberman this year.

I was thinking, when Chelsea and I were sitting there listening to Hillary talk, two things. First of all, I thought she was giving a great talk. [*Laughter*] And I thought she gave a great speech at the convention Monday night. And I want to echo what she said about the Vice President's speech last night. It was an extraordinary speech and a great roadmap for the country's future, and I'm grateful for that.

But I want to talk to you from a unique perspective, because my family has a new candidate and my party, as of last night, has a new leader. And so in this election, though I will be President and I have a lot I'm going to try to get done for you in the next 5 months, I am moving back to where I spent

the first 20 years of my active life in politics, from the time I was 8 years old and my uncle was running for the State legislature at home, and I was passing out cards for him at the polling place. That is, I'm coming back to where you are. I'm going to be a citizen activist, and I'm going to try to be a good one. But I've had a unique opportunity to see what makes a country change and grow, and also to understand clearly the consequences of elections and the decisions made by the people whom we elect.

So I can't begin to add anything to what I said last Monday about what happened the last 8 years, what Hillary and Al Gore said about what ought to happen in the next 4 years. But I can tell you this: What the election rides on is whether the people of this country, the people of this State, and the people of this part of New York believe it's a big election, not a little election, and understand that there are differences and know what the differences are.

So as somebody who's sort of coming back your way, to citizen activism, I thank you for coming here tonight; I thank you for your support for all your local candidates. And Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here, and all the other local officials, I thank you for your support for Hillary. It means so much to me, and it will be good for New York.

But I want to ask you to leave here remembering what I said. I tried to make the argument last Monday night that for all the progress we have made in the last 8 years, the best stuff is still out there, because that's what I believe. That's what I believe.

If you just think about it, we had to work so hard to turn the economy around and get rid of the deficit. Now we can bring prosperity to the people and places left behind. We had to work so hard to get the crime rate going down instead of going up. Now we can focus on making America the safest big country in the world. We had to work so hard in getting in place the things that work in education. Now we can focus on making sure every child in this country can get a world-class education from kindergarten through college.

We are in a position to take advantage of all these scientific discoveries and all these technological developments in a way that has

never been possible in this country and, as Hillary said, could bring great economic opportunity to upstate New York. But the people have to choose wisely.

And I can just tell you, as somebody who spent the first 20 years of my life working to try to persuade other people to vote for folks I thought ought to be elected; and then who spent 22 of the last 24 years as a public official trying to convince people I ought to be elected and reelected and what I was doing made sense; as someone who's looking forward to an election where I can support a man I believe in for President, a man I believe in for Vice President, and a woman I think would be one of the great United States Senators of our time for the Senate, I can tell you, not everybody thinks about this as much as you do.

Isn't that right? Whether they're Democrats, independents, or Republicans, not everybody sits around and thinks about this as much as you do. This is a massive crowd tonight. But there are more people from this area who aren't here than people who are, right? By definition. That's not a criticism. This is a huge crowd. It blew me away when I walked in here. But the point I'm trying to make is that between now and election day, each one of you will have a chance every day to say, "Look, this is a big deal here. You've got to take this seriously." The people you work with, the people you're in civic clubs with, the people you worship with, the people you run into on the street or drink coffee with, you can say, "Look, this is a big election. You remember where this country was 8 years ago?"

And those of you who are over 30 can make this point to younger people. You know, you get a time like this in a country's life maybe once in a lifetime, where you get the chance to build a future of your dreams for your kids. So once you convince people it's a big election and they have to take it seriously, you're halfway home in terms of persuading them to vote for our people.

And then the second thing you have to convince them of is that there are significant differences that will affect their lives, their children's lives, and the future of New York and the United States.

So as someone who is profoundly grateful to all of you—there's hardly a place in America that's been more generous to me more consistently than New York has—I want you to know that the best thing I can give back to you is to do my dead-level best to get everything I can do done for America in the 5 months I've got left to be President and to persuade the American people that a chance like this comes along once in a lifetime.

I've worked hard to turn the country around, but all the best stuff is still out there. But the American people have to believe it's a big election, and there are big consequences because there are big differences. If you can take some time every day between now and November to talk to your friends, without regard to their parties, in a calm and open way—[laughter]—making those two points—making those two points, say, “Hey, we're not mad at these other guys. We don't have anything bad to say about them. But look, it's a big election, and there are big differences, and here's what the differences are, and they'll have consequences for your lives and your children and your future.”

If you will take some time to do that, then we'll have a great night on November 7th, because Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary will be elected, and America will be better off.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:17 p.m. at the Saranac Lake Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Thomas Catillaz of Saranac Lake; Philip Lalande, patron, Saranac Lake Civic Center; and Anne Tubby, longtime resident of Saranac Lake. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

August 19, 2000

Good morning. During the recent political convention, we asked people all across our country to take stock of our Nation's progress and the challenges that lie ahead. One thing is clear: We live in a moment of unprecedented peace and prosperity, and getting there was not a matter of chance but of choice.

When the Vice President and I set out to restore the American dream 8 years ago, we faced some tough choices. But with the support of the American people, we made those choices together. Today I want to talk about how far we've come and how we can use this historic good time to address our outstanding challenges at home and abroad.

We now enjoy the longest economic expansion in our history, turning record deficits into record surpluses, creating more than 22 million jobs with the lowest unemployment in 30 years, and average family income has jumped by more than \$5,000.

But more than just being better off, America is a better nation. We ended welfare as we knew it. With the benefits of job training, child care, and transportation, 7½ million Americans have moved from welfare to work. We're turning our schools around with higher standards, more accountability, more investment. As a result, our reading, math, and SAT scores are going up, and more students than ever are going to college. We made our communities safer by putting 100,000 new police officers on the streets, banning assault weapons, keeping guns away from a half million felons, fugitives, and stalkers, and together, we brought crime to a 25-year low.

We've also extended the life of the Medicare Trust Fund by 26 years and passed the Family and Medical Leave Act, which over 20 million Americans have used to take a little time off for a newborn baby or a sick loved one. Our air and water are cleaner; our food is safer.

We've also stepped up our fight against AIDS, doubling AIDS research and prevention efforts. We're working on the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act to provide a lifeline to half-million Americans living with HIV and AIDS.

While we're making real progress in the fight against AIDS here at home, we have to do more to combat this plague around the world. That's why today I'm pleased to sign the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act. This bipartisan legislation authorizes funding for AIDS treatment and prevention programs worldwide and increases investment in vaccines for the world's children, including AIDS vaccine research. I hope Congress will also approve our vaccine tax credit