

of the old economy. That's the sort of politics I believe we ought to embrace.

And so I'm going all across the country trying to help Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and all of our candidates for the Senate and the House, because it's the right thing to do for America's future.

Now, that brings me to Hillary and this race. You have to pick the person who will succeed to the Senate seat of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Robert Kennedy. You don't have to worry about whether she'll be the junior Senator. Senator Schumer's aggression will take care of that—[laughter]—and I say that with great admiration.

I do want to say one other thing about him. For all the good things he's done, the thing that I'll never forget is that he helped Al Gore and me and our administration stand up to the NRA and stand for gun safety.

But Senator Schumer already said a few things about Hillary. Let me say, of all the things that her adversaries sometimes say, the thing that steams me the most is that she wouldn't be doing this if she weren't the First Lady. What I want you to know is, if she weren't the First Lady, she'd have been in a position to do this 25 years ago.

She will tell—when we first met and fell in love, I actually felt guilty about it because I thought I was robbing her of the career that I felt she should have. I thought she was better organized than me. I thought she was a better—I thought she understood things about public policy I didn't know. I thought she had more talent as a public servant than anybody I ever met. And I have watched her spend 30 years helping other people as a private citizen, all the way up until she came to the White House and she wrote a best-selling book and gave 100 percent of the money to children's charities that she earned; when she fought for the family and medical leave law; when she fought to insure millions more children under the Child's Health Insurance Program; when she fought for better treatment for breast cancer and diabetes and Parkinson's. And I could just go on and on and on.

I can tell you that when the record of this administration is written, one of the chapters will have to be how she fundamentally

changed the scope, depth, and range of the role of First Lady.

I do think there ought to be one person in the Senate who is a recognized national lifetime advocate and expert on children's issues and on the relationship of work and childrearing and on education and health care. I think that's important. But the main thing you need to know is that I still feel the way I did almost 30 years ago: I've never known anybody that I thought had a greater capacity for public service, had a greater sense of mind and heart and operational effectiveness.

And I want to see this seat occupied by someone, yes, that I happened to have loved for three decades, but more important, whose love can change the future of America and New York in a positive way.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Jonathan Lidersdorf, dinner host; Jerry Colonna, Barbara Chang, Fernando Espuelas and his wife, Ann, and Andrew Rasiej, dinner host committee; Senator John D. Rockefeller IV, who was Governor of West Virginia, 1976–1984; and Mark Green, New York City Public Advocate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address *September 9, 2000*

Good morning. This year our Nation is experiencing one of the worst wildfire seasons in memory. Extreme weather and lightning strikes have helped spark an estimated 250 fires every day. More than 6.6 million acres have burned already, and more than 35 large fires continue in 9 States. We've all witnessed the tragedy of family homes destroyed and admired the bravery of firefighters and citizens joining efforts to battle the blazes. I saw it firsthand in Idaho last month, and I'll never forget it.

Today I want to talk with you about important new steps we're taking to help communities recover and to ease the threat of fires in the years ahead. For months now, we've been mobilizing Federal resources to provide firefighters and communities the tools they

need to combat the fires. More than 25,000 Federal, State, and local personnel have been engaged in the effort. We provided \$590 million in emergency firefighting funds, and recently I declared Montana and Idaho disaster areas, making them eligible for more Federal relief. But we must do more.

That's why I directed Interior Secretary Babbitt and Agriculture Secretary Glickman to prepare a report outlining a strategy to help communities recover from these fires and to ensure that others are spared from similar tragedies in the future. Today I'm accepting the recommendations contained in this report and announcing the first steps we're taking to implement them.

First, saving lives and property is and will remain priority one. Our Nation is blessed with the best firefighting force in the world. They're doing an extraordinary job in some of the most dangerous and difficult conditions imaginable. Some are finally returning home for well-deserved rest. But the fire season isn't over, and as long as the fires burn, our firefighters will continue to receive our strong support to get the job done as quickly and safely as possible.

Second, we're launching new actions to help hard-hit communities recover as the smoke clears. Once the fires are out, the threat doesn't stop. Rain, for example, could trigger mudslides, and dirty runoff threatens water quality. To help prevent further damage, we've dispatched more than 50 rapid response teams to work with local communities to develop plans to repair damaged lands and protect precious water supplies.

In addition, we've just released nearly \$40 million for 90 restoration projects throughout the West. We'll also soon establish one-stop centers in Idaho and Montana, so that citizens can gain quick access to assistance, from unemployment aid to small business loans. We want to make sure the help gets to those who need it right away.

Finally, we must continue to take a long-range look to diminish the threats from fires in the years ahead. For almost 100 years our Nation pursued a policy focusing on extinguishing all wildfires. It was well-intentioned, but as a result, many of our forests now have an unnatural buildup of brush and shrubs. This excessive undergrowth fuels forest fires,

making them far more dangerous and difficult to control.

Our administration has taken a new approach to protect communities and reduce wildfire risks by getting rid of the forest underbrush that has accumulated over the last century. We're reducing the risk of fire on more than 2.4 million acres a year, a fivefold increase since 1994. We want to work with communities to expand these efforts in an environmentally sensitive way, particularly in those areas at greatest risk of wildfire.

Today's report provides a blueprint for action, immediate steps to deliver assistance to hard-hit communities, new measures to build on our efforts to ease the threat of wildfires nationwide. The report recommends an additional \$1.5 billion to carry out this strategy, and I'm committed to working with the Congress to secure this critical funding.

Throughout this wildfire season, we've seen our fellow citizens come together to save lives and aid communities in need. That's the best of the American spirit. It's reflected in these new steps to help put out the fires today, help communities heal tomorrow, and help to reduce wildfire threats for years to come.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6 p.m. on September 8 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Need for Congressional Action on Quality Child Care and After-School Opportunities

September 11, 2000

Today the Urban Institute released a report highlighting the struggle working parents face in trying to provide supervised care for their children before and after school. The report found that over 4 million children of working mothers ages 6 to 12 were regularly without any adult supervision when they were not in school. While the report highlights that child care patterns for schoolchildren differ greatly from community to