

But the reason I feel strongly about it is, we worked so hard to turn this country around, get it going in the right direction, and now there's a real hard decision, or set of decisions, to be made. And I can tell you, after 8 years here, obviously it matters who the President and Vice President are. It matters hugely—every single Senate seat, every single House seat.

I wanted to say, in the presence of the Black Caucus members that were here, even when we went into the minority, nothing I achieved here, of any real substance, could have been possible if they hadn't stuck with me every step of the way. It matters, and it really matters who's in the Senate.

And we need to keep changing as a country, but we need to build on what we've done. And when I think of all the great questions facing America, how are we going to provide education for the largest and most diverse group of kids in our history, and I think how long Hillary's been working on that, and the results we got because of her efforts when we were at home in Arkansas; when I think about how are we going to balance the demands of work and rearing children, which is a challenge not just for poor working people but for middle-class working people and for a lot of people that are upper middle class, and I think that, you know, she spent a lifetime working on that. Everybody talks about it now. One of the most popular pieces of legislation we ever passed, and she helped pass it, was the family and medical leave law. Over 20 million people took some time off when a baby was born or a parent was sick without losing their jobs. Twenty-two years ago—22 years ago—she founded a statewide advocacy group for families and children at home, long before it was fashionable to think about.

When I think about how are we going to spread this prosperity to people and places that have been left behind, that's what she spent 8 years doing as First Lady, going to places to promote microcredit and economic empowerment, all around the world. Same issues apply in upstate New York and the inner-city areas that have been left behind. And I could go on and on and on.

We need somebody who's spent a lifetime working on the things that we need to decide

to do now, because most people don't have to do it now. And we need somebody who thinks about the future all the time. And so even if I didn't know her better than anybody in this room, I'd be for her because of what she's done and what she's achieved and what she wants to do.

You know, most of the time we've been hit so many times, between the two of us, we're kind of thick-skinned. But one thing sometimes people say that really steams me is—I heard somebody the other day say, "Well, she wouldn't even be running if she weren't First Lady."

Let me tell you something. If you look at her record as a lawyer, as a public servant, she spent 30 years helping everybody else. She never asked anybody to do anything for her. But if she hadn't married me so long ago and chosen to live a life of volunteer public service, she could have been doing this 20, 25 years ago.

So you get somebody now who has spent a lifetime in public service, always giving to other candidates, other causes, always leading by the power of her example, who actually has spent a lifetime doing what America needs to focus on most, today, when we think about the future.

This is a big decision, and you've helped to make sure it will be the right one, and I am very grateful to you. But you will be very proud of what she does for New York and America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Weldon and Connie Latham. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

September 16, 2000

Good morning. I'm joining you today from the Washington Home, a nursing home in our Nation's Capital that has been delivering quality care to older Americans for more than 100 years now. The seniors here with me receive top-quality assistance from a dedicated and attentive staff.

Every one of the 1.6 million Americans living in nursing homes all across our Nation deserve the same quality care. And as the baby boomers retire, the demand for quality care will continue to rise even higher. By the year 2030, the number of Americans over the age of 85 will double, making compassionate, quality nursing home care even more important.

But while the majority of nursing homes today provide excellent care, too many of our seniors and Americans with disabilities in homes, in too many of those homes, are not getting the proper attention they deserve. According to current research, the number one culprit is chronic understaffing. When there are too few caregivers for the number of patients, the quality of care goes down.

A recent study from the Department of Health and Human Services reports that more than half of America's nursing homes don't have the minimum staffing levels necessary to guarantee quality care. And too often the staff that is there isn't properly trained. Patients in these homes are more likely to lose too much weight, develop bed sores, fall into depression. More than 30 percent are dehydrated, malnourished, at much higher risk for illness and infection.

Older Americans who have worked hard all their lives deserve respect, not neglect, and for more than 7 years now, Vice President Gore and I have acted to improve the quality of care in our Nation's nursing homes. In 1995 we put in place new regulations to crack down on abuse and neglect, stepping up on-site inspections of nursing homes.

That same year, when Congress tried to eliminate Federal assurances of nursing home quality, I said no. Then in 1998 I issued an Executive order, requiring all States to increase investigations of nursing homes and fine those that failed to provide the residents with adequate care.

Today I'm taking four new steps to improve nursing home conditions across America. First, working with Senator Grassley, a Republican from Iowa, and Senator Breaux, a Democrat from Louisiana, along with Representatives Waxman, Stark, and Gephardt, I'm sending legislation to Congress next week that I believe can be enacted this year. It will create \$1 billion in new grants to boost

staffing levels in nursing homes that need it most, to improve recruitment and retention, and to give more training to caregivers, rewarding the best performing nursing homes.

While working to improve nursing home care, we have to act swiftly to keep nursing homes safe. This legislation will impose immediate financial penalties on nursing homes that are endangering the safety of their residents, and then those funds will be used to improve patient care.

Second, I'm directing the Health Care Financing Administration to establish, within 2 years, minimum staffing requirements for all nursing homes participating in the Federal Medicare and Medicaid programs. The agency will also develop recommendations to ensure that nursing homes receive the necessary payments for high-quality care.

Third, we are taking new measures to educate caregivers at nursing homes. Just this week we launched a new campaign in America's 17,000 nursing homes to identify residents who are at risk and prevent them becoming dehydrated or malnourished.

And finally, to help families select the right nursing home, we'll require all facilities to post the number of health care personnel serving their patients.

Of all the obligations we owe to one another, our most sacred duty is to our parents. They kept us safe from harm when we were children, and we must do the same for them as they grow older. They shouldn't go another day without the care they deserve wherever they live, in whatever nursing home facility.

President Kennedy once said, "It is not enough for a great nation merely to have added new years to life. Our objective must be also to add new life to those years."

The steps we're taking today will help to bring new life to our Nation's seniors by bringing a new level of quality to America's nursing homes.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Washington Home.

Exchange With Reporters at the Dedication of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial

September 16, 2000

India-United States Relations

Q. Mr. President, how would you describe the visit, overall, of the Indian Prime Minister? What has this visit meant to Indo-U.S. relations?

The President. Well, I think it's been a great success. It sort of rounds out our efforts to take a different turn in our relationships, to deepen and broaden them. As I have said many times, I am profoundly grateful for the reception that I received from the Prime Minister, the Government, and the people of India when I came with my daughter and my mother-in-law a few months ago.

I hope that this change in partnership goes beyond my service, into a whole new era of partnership between India and the United States.

You know, one thing I didn't mention a moment ago is that, in addition to the Government of India, Americans who are of Indian heritage also contributed to this magnificent memorial. There is probably no country outside India that has been more enriched by Indians than the United States. So that's another reason, and I think it's important we continue to go forward together.

Mahatma Gandhi

Q. Mr. President, has Mahatma Gandhi made an influence on your life, sir, in any way?

The President. Well, when I was a boy, actually, I was a profound admirer of Martin Luther King, and I began to read all his writings. And when I read that he was so influenced by Gandhi, then I began to read about Gandhi. I was, I don't know, 17, 18, or something like that.

H-1B Visas

Q. Mr. President, since you talked about the Indian contribution—about immigration, H-1B visas, does your administration want to do something?

The President. Let me say this, the number of H-1B visas will be increased in this Congress, I believe. I'll be quite surprised

if it isn't. The issue is, how much will it be increased by, and can we use the occasion of increasing the quotas to get some more funds from the companies that are hiring people for the training of our own people, who could also do these jobs—the people who are already here—if they had training? So there's no question that we're going to increase the visas.

India-United States Relations

Q. Mr. President, the fact is, you said you're very excited; it was a very positive visit. In concrete terms, where do you see the alliance going now? Where in concrete terms do you see India and the United States as natural allies going ahead?

The President. Well, I hope in the years ahead we'll be better economic partners, better political partners. I hope we'll work together through the United Nations and other international forums. I hope we'll both be able to help to turn back what could otherwise be a dangerous tide of proliferation of dangerous weapons, not just nuclear warheads on missiles, either, chemical weapons, biological weapons. I hope we'll be able to turn that back.

And I hope some day that there will be some constructive role we could play as a partner in working with India and others to bring peace on the subcontinent.

Q. Will you be a strategic ally? Will we be a strategic ally?

The President. We've done enough talking today. [Laughter] If you want to ask the Prime Minister a question—[laughter]—

Post-Presidential Visit to India

Q. Mr. President, do you see yourself going back to India after post-Presidency?

The President. Absolutely. Absolutely. I hope I'll be able to go back to India for the rest of my life. I don't mean permanently, but I mean to keep going back, always.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:04 a.m. in a park at Massachusetts Ave. and 21st St. NW., near the Indian Embassy. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Atal Bahari Vajpayee of India; and the President's mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham.