

was young, handsome, vigorous, had a drop-dead gorgeous, wonderful wife, great family. I loved him. He was full of energy, and he was just one of the two or three best people that I ever met in this outfit, and I worked with him for a decade. And I loved being around him.

Joe Martin, while still a young man, got Lou Gehrig's disease. That's what Stephen Hawking, the famous British scientist, has. Eventually, you lose all your movement. Hawking still can move his fingers, and he uses his computer to speak.

Now, Joe Martin has no movement anywhere. Nothing moves but his eyes. I used this laser technology now that the Internet has. You sit in front of it; they focus a camera on you; it gets your eyes on the screen; then they put the laser—it bounces off your eye. I turned lights on and off; I turned music on and off; I typed "good morning" to the people there and then pushed "speak" with my eyes and it said, "good morning."

And sometime in the next couple of months, Joe Martin is going to publish a book he wrote with his eyes. Even more important, he can still talk to his wife and kids. And so he's still got a story. I'm a Democrat because I know everybody has got a story.

I was raised by an extended family of wonderful people. Most of them didn't have any education. Most of them didn't have any money, but they taught me that everybody had a story and should be treated with dignity, and we would all do better if we helped each other. I still believe that, and with 8 years of evidence, I think it's a pretty good argument for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary and the rest of our crowd.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Mitchell Stein and Tracy S. Hampton; Sim Farar, treasurer, PAC for a Change, and his wife, Debra; Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush; State Attorney General Bill Lockyer; and State Assembly Speaker Robert M. Hertzberg. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Need for Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in Santa Fe, New Mexico

September 25, 2000

Thank you very much. Connie, you can drink my water anytime. [*Laughter*] Didn't she do a good job? [*Applause*] I was really proud of her. Thank you.

Thank you, Greg Neal, for welcoming us here in this beautiful, beautiful center. I'd like to thank your Congressman, Representative Tom Udall, for joining us today. Thank you, Tom, for being here. And Attorney General Patsy Madrid, thank you for being here. A little bird told me this was your birthday today, so thank you for spending your birthday with us, in a worthy cause. Santa Fe Mayor pro tem Carol Robertson Lopez, thank you for being here. I thank the members of the city council and county commission and many others who have come here. Our former U.S. attorney, John Kelly, and my college classmate, thank you for being here. I've got a lot of other personal friends here, as well as those of you who are involved in these endeavors, and I thank you.

But most of all I want to express my appreciation to the brave women in this audience who have survived the horrors and fears of domestic violence for being with us today and for being in this very public setting. Connie, I thank you for sharing your story with us and for somehow finding the strength to help other women deal with theirs.

We are here today to salute your efforts, to recognize that progress has been made, and to remind all Americans that the struggle with domestic violence is far from over. We're also here because, on Saturday night, on the very eve of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Violence Against Women Act will actually expire without congressional action.

We're here to say to Congress, we owe it to women like Connie Trujillo and millions of others and their children and families to reauthorize and to strengthen the Violence Against Women Act and to do it this week, now, before the clock runs out.

For too long, women like those who have been victimized in this room today fought a lonely battle. For too long, domestic violence was an issue kept behind closed doors, treated as a purely private family matter. Despite the fact that it usually does occur at home, despite the fact that victims are almost always women and children, domestic violence is not just a family problem that neighbors can ignore, not just a woman's problem men can turn away from. It is America's problem.

The statistics speak for themselves. Domestic violence is the number one health risk for women between the ages of 15 and 44 in our Nation. Close to a third of all the women murdered in America were killed by their husbands, former husbands, or boyfriends. Every 12 seconds another woman is beaten, amounting to nearly 900,000 victims every single year. And we know that in half the families where a spouse is beaten, the children are beaten, too.

Domestic violence is a crime that affects us all. It increases health costs, keeps people from showing up to work, prevents them from performing at their best, keeps children out of school, often prevents them from learning. It destroys families, relationships, and lives, and often prevents children from growing up to establish successful families of their own. It tears at the fabric of who we are as a people and what we want for our children's tomorrows.

For many years, when Hillary and I were living in Arkansas, we lived very close to the domestic violence shelter and center in our hometown. We spent lots of hours there, talking to the women and the children and listening to their stories. I'm very proud of the fact that after we moved to Washington, Hillary traveled all around the world to highlight the fact that violence against women and children is not an American problem. It's a global problem, with different manifestations, and in many places violent practices masquerade as cultural traditions. That is wrong.

And I have to tell you that every time I come into a setting like this, I think about the encounters that—because of Hillary's efforts—I've had with village women in remote places in Africa and in Latin America. And

it is truly chilling to think about all the different rationalizations people have cooked up all over the world to justify men beating up on women and twisting the lives of their children.

We have come a long way in the United States in recognizing that this is criminal conduct, that there may be deep-seated emotional reasons for it which treatment is a better answer for than incarceration in some cases. But it's a crime. And it's a crime against the people who suffer, against the children who are tormented by it, very often for the rest of their lives, and against the larger society that we are trying to build.

For 8 years now, the Vice President and I have tried to convey this simple message. Our message to the perpetrators is that you should be punished, and to the victims is, we want you to have safety and security. No American should live in fear, least of all in his or her own home.

The Violence Against Women Act was part of our landmark 1994 crime bill. It was the very first time in the history of America that the Nation's Government, in a comprehensive effort, joined those of you here and your counterparts all across America in standing up and making common cause on this issue.

The Violence Against Women Act imposes tough penalties for actions of violence against women. It also helps to train police and prosecutors and judges so they can better understand domestic violence, something which, believe it or not, is still a significant problem all across the United States.

It helps to train people to recognize the symptoms when they see it. It helps people, perhaps most important of all, to take appropriate, systematic steps to prevent it. The law gives grants to shelters who need more beds and better programs. It provides assistance to law enforcement, the courts, and communities, to help them respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking when they occur. It established a 24-hour, 7-day, toll-free, national domestic violence hotline, to help women get emergency help and counseling, find a shelter, report abuse to authorities. Since 1996, this hotline has given more than 500,000 people a place to call to find help when they need it most.

The act has offered hope to countless numbers of women by letting them know they are not alone. Police officers who often shy away from so-called family squabbles should now get involved. Physical violence is unacceptable in our homes.

The law's impact is no clearer than here in Sante Fe, where the act and its much needed funding has helped make the city's streets, schools, and homes safer. With the act's help, Connie and her Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families provided counseling and shelter to nearly 2,000 families last year.

With the act's help, eight northern Indian pueblo councils here in Santa Fe now have the means to give legal advice and victims counseling to Native American women and proper training to tribal police departments, courts, and prosecutors. With the act's help, the Morning Star Program in Albuquerque provides safe houses and support groups for victims and their families. All told, the Violence Against Women Act has dedicated nearly—listen to this—\$1.7 billion since 1994 to programs combating domestic violence around our Nation, including more than \$173 million this year alone.

Today the Department of Justice will award nearly \$2 million in Violence Against Women Act funds to combat domestic violence here in New Mexico, to strengthen tribal law enforcement, address child abuse and domestic violence in rural areas, and improve civil legal assistance programs.

Now, has all this made a difference? Well, thanks to your work in programs like the ones here in Santa Fe, we know that the Violence Against Women Act is having a real impact on domestic abuse. According to a recent study from 1993 to 1998, violence against women by an intimate partner fell by 21 percent. In the years 1996, '97, and '98, intimate partners committed fewer murders than at any other time since 1976, when there were far fewer people in this country.

So while we have made strides in our war against domestic violence, you only have to look around to know we've still got miles to go. We cannot turn our backs on the millions of women and children trapped in the cycle of domestic violence. We can't allow them to face a nightmare alone.

Let me say to you, this really shouldn't be a partisan issue. When Congress first passed the Violence Against Women Act, we had strong support from Republicans, as well as Democrats. This summer, in a bipartisan effort, both the House and the Senate Judiciary Committees approved extending and reauthorizing and approving the Violence Against Women Act—both Republicans and Democrats.

Why is this not law now? The committees have approved it. We have more than enough votes in both Houses to pass it. Because this issue, for reasons I cannot understand, has been used as a political football in Washington. All the congressional leadership has to do is to put it up for a vote, and it will fly through. And so again I implore the leadership of Congress not to play games with the safety and future of women and children.

I ask all of you and those who will hear this message all across America tonight: Contact your Senators and your Representatives and tell them to ask the majority leadership in Congress simply to schedule this for a vote. This is not rocket science. There is no complication here. Everybody knows what this law is. Everybody knows what it will do. Everybody knows what it has done. Yes, we're close to an election, and yes, there are a lot of things that various people want to get done in Congress between now and the end of the session when they go home for the election. Nobody wants to get anything any more done than I do, but it is wrong to delay this one more hour. Schedule the bill for a vote.

I have spent a lot of time in the last 8 years trying to make peace around the world, trying to get people from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans to the African tribal conflicts to lay down their ancient hatreds and stop dehumanizing people who are different from them. I spent a good deal of time trying to make peace within our borders, trying to get people to give up old hatreds of those who are different from them because they're of a different race or religion or because they're gay, to give up all that.

But it is very hard for us to make peace around the world, or even around the land, unless we are first committed to making peace within our homes. And I think we

should stay at this until the day when we are truly shocked if we hear a little boy or a girl say something at school about witnessing a violent incident in their home, when it is so rare, people gasp in astonishment.

We're a long way from there. But we owe it to our kids and all the women and children who have already been injured to keep at it until we reach that day.

Thank you very, very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:32 p.m. at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Connie Trujillo, executive director, Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families; Greg Neal, director, Genoveva Chavez Community Center; and New Mexico State Attorney General Patsy A. Madrid.

Remarks at a New Mexico Coordinated Campaign Victory 2000 Reception in Santa Fe

September 25, 2000

Thank you very much. First, ladies and gentlemen, let me just thank you for coming here. I want to thank our hosts. And thank you, Diane, and thank you, Bill Sisneros, the Santa Fe Democratic chair.

I thank all the tribal leaders who are here. I thank your predecessor, Earl Potter, who is here tonight. Thank you very much. I'm glad to see you.

I want to thank Congressman Udall. He's done a great job. He's really fun to work with, and as you can see, he's sort of a high-energy person. [*Laughter*] And he has this idea which, there for a few years in Washington, I was afraid was getting altogether too rare. He actually thinks he's supposed to go back to Washington and get something done for you, instead of just—[*laughter*]—and he's really, really good, and you should be very proud of him. I like him very much.

I want to thank my friend of more than 30 years John Kelly, for running for Congress and for his service as United States attorney. And I urge you to do what you can to help him. We're just six seats short of being in the majority. And it makes a huge difference. I'll just give you an example.

Today, before I came here, I went over to a shelter for battered women and troubled children and families. And we're in this big struggle to get the Violence Against Women Act reauthorized, which ought to be an absolute laydown. And we clearly have a bipartisan majority in both Houses for this legislation.

But the leadership, for reasons I don't quite understand, has not scheduled it for a vote, and it's supposed to run out Friday night. If we had six more seats, it would have been reauthorized months and months ago. So I say to you, it's a big issue for all the New Mexico-specific reasons and also because your Nation needs it, I think, very clearly.

I'd like to say more than anything else a word of thanks to a number of people. First, on behalf of Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore, I want to thank the people of New Mexico for sticking with us for two elections and giving us your electoral vote.

And I want to say even more, thank you for how much I've learned about America and specific parts of America, from the people of New Mexico; from our friends the Sikhs, many of who were at the Indian Prime Minister's dinner the other night; from most especially the tribal leaders and those whom they represent. I was at the, you know, on the Shiprock Reservation not very long ago. And I think I'm the only American President ever to go to two Native American reservations, and I know I am the first President since James Monroe in the 1820's to invite all of the tribal leaders back to Washington to meet with me.

And I've had liaison in the White House to the Native American community since the first day I became President. And I can't begin to tell you what it's meant to me to try to work with you to meet the common challenges we face and try to help solve some longstanding problems and try to change the whole nature of the relationship between the United States and the Native American tribes.

I want to thank Tom Udall for what he said about me and my friends. You know, I have to say for my friends, I may be the only President in the entire history of the country who was literally elected because of