

need to have a Senate that has a lot more people who think like us; and we need to win this Presidential race. And we will do it. The good news is the American people get it in general. They want this election to be about the issues. They have a sense that this is an extraordinary opportunity. And that's the last thing I'll say.

Al Gore sometimes says, "You ain't seen nothing yet." And I guess, when somebody running says that, it sounds like a campaign statement. I'm not running for anything, and I believe it. I have done my best for 8 years to turn this country around. I've done my best to turn the country around, pull the country together, and move the country forward. But it takes time to turn a country around, to get all the indicators going in the right direction.

Maybe once in 50 years does a great democracy find itself with prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence, the absence of domestic crisis or external threat. This just doesn't happen where all this stuff happens at once. We've got a chance for you young people to actually build the future of your dreams. But we have to decide. We have to choose. We cannot pretend that this is not important.

And I'm glad you came here. And I guess in any election year, Mark and Tom and their families could pull out this kind of crowd at 10 o'clock on a Friday night. [*Laughter*] But this election year, you mark my words, this is a big deal.

I was 18 once, the last time we had low unemployment, high growth, low inflation. We had a civil rights challenge, but we thought there would never be riots in the streets, and it would all be resolved in Congress and the courts. And we sort of kind of drifted off and got our attention divided and found ourselves kind of embroiled in Vietnam. And then before you know it, it had divided the country. We had riots in the streets. Dr. King was killed. Senator Kennedy was killed. President Johnson, who had done so much for civil rights and to alleviate poverty and so much to help education, had a country so divided, he said he wouldn't and probably couldn't run for reelection. And before you knew it, the last time we had an

economy like this and a sense of possibility, it was gone like that.

Now we have to concentrate, and we have to argue. We don't have to be mean. We don't have to be negative. All we've got to do is be clear, honest, and energetic. The best is still out there. You need to go get it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 p.m. at the Washington Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jill Cooper Udall, wife of Representative Tom Udall; former President Slobodan Milosevic and President Vojislav Kostunica of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), who was sworn in on October 7; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush. Representative Tom Udall is a candidate for reelection in New Mexico's Third Congressional District. Representative Mark Udall is a candidate for reelection in Colorado's Second Congressional District. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7353—Afterschool Week, 2000

October 6, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Each weekday afternoon in America, the ringing of school bells signals not just the end of the school day, but also the beginning of a period when 8 to 15 million of our children are home alone. These so-called "latchkey" children can be found in every American community, whether urban, suburban, or rural; they are the children of working parents who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to arrange or afford a better alternative. Not surprisingly, most juvenile crimes are committed and most children are likely to become victims of crime during the 5 or 6 hours immediately after the school day ends.

Providing appropriate supervision for children after school is one of the more difficult challenges that working parents face. Recognizing this, my Administration has worked hard to provide parents with alternative afternoon activities for their children. Through our 21st Century Community

Learning Centers program, under the leadership of Education Secretary Richard Riley, we are providing schools and community organizations with funding to create and expand learning opportunities for children in a drug-free, supervised environment. This program enables schools to stay open longer so that students have places to do their homework, receive counseling about the dangers of substance abuse, and participate with mentors in a wide array of academic and recreational activities that challenge their imagination and broaden their horizons.

In the 4 years since we created the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, hundreds of thousands of children across our country have enrolled in safe and smart afterschool programs. My proposed budget for fiscal 2001 will more than double the Federal commitment to this program, enabling us to reach as many as 2.5 million students next year. These community learning centers provide America's parents with the comforting assurance that, while they are out earning a living, their children are participating in engaging and constructive afterschool activities.

To highlight the growing need for afterschool programs, the Afterschool Alliance—a partnership of public, private, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to raising awareness and expanding resources for afterschool programs—has announced a nationwide project called “Lights On Afterschool!” On October 12 of this year, schools, community centers, museums, libraries, and parks across the country will host activities to inform families about the places currently open to children after school and the need to provide additional centers where children can participate in engaging, stimulating activities until their parents return from work.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of October 8 to October 14, 2000, as Afterschool Week. I encourage parents, students, educators, community and business leaders, and concerned citizens to participate in “Lights On Afterschool!” activities on Thursday, October 12. I also urge all Americans to recog-

nize the importance of providing afterschool programs in their communities to promote the safety and well-being of our Nation's children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 11, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 7, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 12.

Proclamation 7354—Fire Prevention Week, 2000

October 6, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Each year, fire takes a heavy toll on the lives and property of thousands of Americans. Approximately 100 firefighters and 4,000 civilians die in fires annually; some 25,000 civilians sustain injuries and an average of \$8 billion in property is destroyed. Last year alone, America's fire departments responded to almost 2 million fires. Most of these fires occurred in homes, as did 80 percent of last year's fire fatalities. It is clear from these tragic statistics that if we can better educate Americans about fire safety and prevention, we can save thousands of lives every year.

The most important lesson we can teach about fire is how rapidly it can spread. From the time a smoke alarm sounds in a typical home, a family may have as little as 2 minutes to escape safely. Knowing how to use those minutes wisely is the key to survival. I urge every American to develop and practice regularly a home fire escape plan that identifies two ways out of each room and establishes a meeting place where household members can reunite outside the home. In addition, it is crucial that smoke alarms be installed