

Chapter 2:
Economic Issues

Wages and Employment

Bush Gore

Technology

Bush Gore

Regulation of Business

Bush Gore

Farm Policy

Bush Gore

Energy

Bush Gore

Wages and Employment - Bush

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Old Truths for the New Economy

The highest hopes of the American people — a world at peace, scientific progress, a just and caring society — cannot be achieved by prosperity alone, but neither can they be fulfilled without it. Yet prosperity is not an end in itself. Rather, it is the means by which great things can be achieved for the common good. Our commitment to the nation's economic growth is an affirmation of the real riches of our country: the works of compassion that link home to home, community to community, and hand to helping hand. This is the foundation of America, and that foundation is sound. Even though our economy, and that of the world to which we are now so closely tied, has been utterly transformed over the last two decades, Americans remain true to the faith of our founding fathers.

Yesterday's wildest dreams are today's realities, and there is no limit on the promise of tomorrow. The headiness of technological progress has made our society more future-oriented than ever before. But the fascination with the future means that, more than ever, we need to preserve the foundation that has served us so well. We must not overlook the practical experience of the past. To successfully chart where we should go in the years ahead, we must first look back to see how we got where we are today.

Twenty years ago, the economy was in shambles. Unemployment was at 7.1 percent, inflation at 13.5 percent, and interest rates at 15.3

percent. The Democratic Party accepted that malaise as the price the nation had to pay for Big Government, and in so doing lost the confidence of the American people. Inspired by Presidents Reagan and Bush, Republicans hammered into place the framework for today's prosperity and surpluses. We cut tax rates, simplified the tax code, deregulated industries, and opened world markets to American enterprise. The result was the tremendous growth in the 1980s that created the venture capital to launch the technology revolution of the 1990s.

That's the origin of what is now called the New Economy: the longest economic boom in the Twentieth Century, 40 million new jobs, the lowest inflation and unemployment in memory. The stock market, once a preserve of the well to do, now drives forward with the modest investments of tens of millions of households as ownership in America's economy becomes the norm rather than the exception.

George W. Bush

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Party Platform: Work Place of the Future

Individual Americans, on their own initiative, are already creating the work place of the future. Employees and employers alike need to act as a team, not as adversaries, to be competitive in the world market. Republicans want to empower them to do all of that, because we believe they know what is best for their families, their earnings, and their advancement in an opportunity economy. To help them reach their goals, government must replace antiquated laws that restrict opportunity, increase costs, and inhibit innovation.

Wages and Employment - Gore

Al Gore

San Mateo Adult School

San Mateo, California

June 23, 2000

Job Training

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I'm here today to tell you: you ain't seen nothing yet. Together, we can build even higher and stronger on the foundation of the Clinton years.

One of the most important elements in our winning economic formula has been investment; we've invested in the best venture of all: the American people. Give Americans the tools and skills they deserve, and watch them unleash their own excellence, and improve their own lives.

Every hard-working American should have the chance to use their best talents, from the factory floor to the floor of the stock exchange - wherever they work right now.

That's why I'm announcing a major new commitment to training and re-training -- so that every worker, at every level, in every business, in every industry, has the skills and training to turn a job into a career.

We've learned three new rules for prosperity - a time-tested economic formula that has built so much abundance in this new economy. The fact is, good folks from all across the political spectrum, and from every walk of life, now agree with what common-sense has shown us: observe these rules and prosperity flows. Break even one of them, and our well-being is derailed.

The first is that balancing the budget lowers interest rates - so couples like Laverne and Alfredo can get to square one in the game, and get the capital they need to start their businesses.

The second rule is that paying down the debt frees businesses - even small businesses like theirs—to build future profits, instead of forcing a couple like this to pay the price for someone else's bad choices in the past.

The third rule of prosperity is investment in the human face of success: education. This is the key that unlocks the door to a family's dream.

Eight years ago, when we first set out to give this nation the tools to transform itself, President Clinton and I talked a great deal about something that seemed very new at the time. We said that our economy was changing, and that workers needed more than muscle - they needed trained minds for a new economy. Well, that future is now. We were right to make that case, and the people were right to take a leap of faith with us.

Today, because we saw every worker as a potential leader and made policy accordingly, America itself is the leader in the job-creating technology that is remaking the world.

Remember the bad old days when labor and management were at each others' throats, fighting over smaller slices of a shrinking pie? Well, those days are gone - and good riddance to them.

Here's the best news of all: we've learned that in this time of plenty, more training and education is a win-win scenario for workers and employers alike, turning them into a real team.

Businesses led the way in seeing that treating workers as leaders is plain good capitalism. Because of this new approach, and a highly-skilled team on the factory floor using their minds as skillfully as their hands, a

Ford Taurus today has more computing power than the Apollo 11 that took us to the moon. And every Ford employee can be proud of that fact. No wonder the Big Three auto makers are training their employees in computers and computer-driven manufacturing.

It's been predicted that within the coming years, a single strand of fiber-optic cable, about the thickness of a human hair, will be able to transmit every phone call that's made on mother's day. No wonder the major telecommunications companies - including SBC here in California—are making a major commitment to train their workers to be ahead of the curve, so their people can keep pioneering the networks of the future.

In Silicon Valley, where companies like Cisco are teaming up with the Communications Workers of America to invest in worker training as well, we see the same third rule of prosperity at work. Workers should no longer expect to be cogs in a wheel; their excellence is the fuel of the new win-win economy.

Business leaders tell me everywhere I go that they have high-paying jobs that they can't even fill. That's good news for workers, as long as we keep steering the course of our nation straight. In our manufacturing sector, one in five companies say they want to expand their businesses but need to expand their workers skills to do it. Think about that testimony from America's own CEO's to the effectiveness of the third rule of prosperity: they say that lack of worker skills risks slowing the rapid growth of the economy in the future. Let's stay the course.

Adults with higher levels of education are not only good for business, they're good for families: they earn more, have greater job security, are less likely to be unemployed, and are more likely to find new jobs quickly if they are displaced. Kids benefit from all of this. In fact, displaced workers with an associate's degree or higher are finding new jobs that

pay even more than the jobs they lost.

As President, on behalf of the gifted workers of America, I will stand firm against anyone who wants to break our rules for prosperity. As President, I'm going to defend the third rule: I'm going to make sure you have all the education and training you need, so that the American people can continue to power this economy as fast and as far as your skills and ingenuity will take you.

I will not let you be dragged back to broken policies of the past. I will not let your family suffer for it. I will not let this country go back to the days when people worked just as hard - but with the clouds of profligate decision-making hanging over them.

As President, I am determined, on your behalf, to defend our three-part, tried-and-tested economic formula: balancing the budget, completely eliminating the debt for our children, and investing in the American people.

I'll fight to open the doors to higher education wider than ever in our history. On your kids' behalf, I'll make college tuition tax deductible - to give working families a break, rather than an extra burden, when they take the initiative to learn even more. On your family's behalf, I want to create new 401(j) accounts - lifelong learning accounts—so you can save tax-free if you decide to go back to school. The gap in wages between those with and without college education has doubled in the past 20 years. With the surplus we now have - because of our discipline in sticking to the rules - this is a great moment to close that gap. A great nation sets itself to great achievements - and this is the time for big decisions and big dreams.

And today, I'm announcing three additional new steps to give your families and your businesses the skills you need to continue to master the new economy:

First, people who are already working deserve to upgrade their skills - and I will help them. I propose to fund partnerships of employers, colleges, unions, and others—to prospect for skills opportunities in their own communities, and then connect workers to the training they need. I urge all the nation's employers to join in this effort as well - to make this a win-win situation for everybody.

Second, good employers deserve credit and help when they give good workers job training. I propose new tax credits for employers, of up to \$6,000 per person, specially targeted so that front-line workers—those who do the hard, day-in, day-out, hands-on labor—can get the skills that are so important in the new economy. For instance, we'll make it easier for factory floor workers to master the computer skills that are fueling prosperity all the way from Pennsylvania's steel mills to Silicon Valley's software markets.

Finally, let's have the courage to face the tough realities, too: even in the midst of a booming economy, some workers - maybe even people that you know, or maybe you yourself at some point - hit rocky patches, lose their jobs in mid-life, and just plain don't have the skills they need to get another job, let alone a better job. Everyone in this room knows how tough that can be on a good hard-working family. Let's leave those days behind forever.

On behalf of those families, here is my commitment to ease their steps to getting the skills and training they need to go for that job listed in the want ads that they had thought they had to cross off their list. The fact is, there is no shortage of new jobs in this new economy. There are 22 million new jobs in America today.

I will not tolerate on my watch a single hard-working American being shut out, or left behind. I will create new “training allowances” - which will help extend unemployment insurance for those who need time to

finish their training courses. I won't let the clock run out on any family's dream.

This is about more than a paycheck. It's really about a family's pride: pride in knowing that you can reach out for your dreams, with nothing to hold you back. Pride at opening up your own new business venture - making a payroll, and giving other people a chance to get ahead. Pride at being more than a mere spectator in this new time of prosperity - but being at the very heart of our economic success as a nation.

Together, in this election, that's the kind of prosperity and progress we can bring across America.

Al Gore

The AFL-CIO Transportation
Trades Department Convention
Washington, D.C.
July 21, 2000

Union Organization & Minimum Wage

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Well I just want to start off by telling you this. On behalf of the bus drivers, on behalf of the transportation workers, on behalf of all the working men and women and families in this country, we are going to win this election and make sure that we keep our country moving forward for prosperity and progress and good wages and good working conditions and policies that make sense for working families.

And you can count on it. I want to fight for you and for your family and for your future.

You know, it really is a tough fight this year because the stakes are so high and the other side is running a \$100 million campaign, financed mainly by the special interests and the wealthy and powerful. I want to fight for the people and not the powerful. That really is the fundamental divide in this election.

And it doesn't take too much searching of the memory to conjure up what it was like, what it felt like, eight, 10 years ago, because the policies that the other side is advocating right now are really 20 years old and they did a lot of damage back in the '80s. And we're been there and done that, and still paying the bill. And the results back then are ones that we remember quite vividly because we had the biggest deficits in history. They were used as an occasion for squeezing down on everything that was of benefit to working families. We had the deepest recession, since

the 1930s, back when they were in power.

And in fact, toward the end of that 12-year period, we had what they called a triple-dip recession. Every time the economy showed even a little bit of strength and businesses would borrow to expand, they'd collide with those \$300 billion annual budget deficits and push interest rates up. And then the economy would go right back into recession. And worst of all, people were really beginning to wonder if we had lost our way in America, if we could ever get our act together again, if we could ever recapture that American spirit of solving problems and working together to create a brighter future.

Well, it was clear that we needed a big change. And I want to thank each and every one of you, and those you represent, for giving Bill Clinton and me a chance to bring positive change to the United States of America. In the 1992 election, it was a hard fight, and with your help, we won it.

But the fight didn't stop there, because when we got in, we began to formulate and then present an economic plan that would change things around and put people first and focus on solving problems and get rid of the funny budget estimates and the illusions that the other side was using. And you talk about a hard fight, in some ways it was even harder than the election. Not one single—lots of Republicans voted for us in the election, not to mention Independents. And Independents and Republicans joined with Democrats out in the country in supporting the positive changes that we tried to bring to our economy. But in the Congress, not a single Republican in either the House or the Senate would vote for change. Not one. And historians, in the future, will marvel at the partisanship that they showed at a time when our country obviously needed change.

But as a result, we narrowly passed a new program by a one-vote

margin in the House and a tie-breaking vote in the Senate, a one-vote margin there. I'll tell you that—that's the best vote I've ever cast in my career because it really made the biggest difference.

And right after that vote, the Republican leadership said, “Oh, this is a catastrophe. This is going to put our country in a tailspin.” Well, we were already in a tailspin. But their predictions were so dire, they make for kind of humorous reading now if you go back and look at what they predicted, because instead of producing a disaster, what happened was we turned the country around and the biggest deficits became the biggest surpluses. Instead of a triple-dip recession, we've seen a tripling of the stock market. Instead of high unemployment and recession after recession, we've had 22 million new jobs, the lowest African American and Latino unemployment in the history of the United States. And officially this year, we crossed the threshold and we now have the strongest, most successful economy in the entire 211-year history of the United States of America and we're closing the gap. This is success.

Incomes are rising. It's the longest period of economic growth ever recorded.

And the fastest income rise now is in the lowest income categories. That's something new. It just keeps getting better.

None of which is to say that we don't have a huge amount of work to do. We do. But now, on this foundation of prosperity, we can see the prospect of even more progress to come.

What I want to accomplish is to keep the prosperity and progress going and make sure that nobody is left behind. We need to keep going, not make a right-wing U-turn and go back to the old ways that failed so miserably before.

And you know, the other side, instead of feeling some sense of joy and happiness in this unprecedented economic success, don't you get

the feeling that they actually feel a little put out by it?

You know, they're kind of grumbling about it. Every time there's a new favorable economic prediction, it's like they have another Excedrin headache or something and they try to minimize it.

And then when they find out that just doesn't fly, they try to explain it all away. And they keep predicting doom just around the next corner.

And then the—in trying to explain it away, they say, “Well, the American people deserve the credit for this.” Well, of course they do. It's their hard work that's done it. But don't you think they were working hard back in 1991? They sure were, and they had less to show for it, because the policies in the Bush-Quayle years were holding them back, because American government was not on their side. They were fighting for the special interests, just as they're proposing to do now. When they were in power, the work of the American people was undone by a government that didn't work and wasn't on their side.

We changed all that, and I'd like to share a little secret of our success. Defending unions and protecting the right to organize is good for the economy of the United States of America. It works to lift up those who most need to be lifted up.

I want you to know I am pro-union and pro-working family, always have been, and I always will be.

I'll always defend the right to organize. I'll always fight to make sure it's never undermined or taken away.

I stood with you against the assault on 13© protections and rail worker protections, and we won that fight for the people. I stood with you when they assaulted Davis-Bacon and we won that fight, and now it's time to repeal the permanent striker replacement laws in this country. I stood with the aviation workers on whistleblower protections, too and we're going to win the fight for flight attendants to get the health and

safety regulations that they deserve. I stood with the Teamsters on safety on the highways, and we're going to win against overnight.

Now, let me just say that I've been proud to stand with you in all these fights, and some of our opponents seem to think that your basic rights in the workplace, including your basic right to safety in the workplace, can just be bargained away for the convenience of the special interests. I really have a very different view. I believe that the right to organize is a fundamental right, and I don't think it should ever be threatened.

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I just think that every working man and woman in this country ought to be able to have that feeling all the time and not be subject to the intimidation and the tricky loopholes and the tricks that are used to frustrate the will of the majority. And I strongly believe that, if we do our jobs well and communicate why this is in the best interests of the country, we are going to be able to bring about a profound change.

Let me say that that goes for public-sector workers, as well, when others try to tear you down or contract you out. I think you have a right to organize.

My commitment to you, when I say I want to keep the prosperity and progress going, is to pursue an economic policy that benefits working families. And let me tell you why I think balancing the budget is an important part of that.

We have seen in recent years, especially in these last seven years, how fiscal responsibility, using real numbers, ends up to the advantage of progressive causes because it helps to keep interest rates low, it helps to build confidence in the marketplace and draw investment capital into the American economy, and generate the kind of economic growth that creates a lot of new jobs and lifts wages, and also provides the resources

and revenues that can be used to—sensibly to pursue objectives that we can't reach in any other way. And that's why I will balance the budget every year and pay down the debt and set the priorities in a way that focuses investment on the best enterprise of all, the American people themselves.

That's a big difference from what the other side is talking about. Their top priority is a massive tax cut for the wealthy. And they use these accounting techniques that have been discredited in the past. And really, the burden should be on them to show why their assumptions should be believed this time around when they were so spectacularly wrong before. You talk about rose-colored glasses, it was ridiculous how the deficits just kept on growing and growing and growing.

I believe that coupled with these commitments to fiscal responsibility and investments in the American people, we have got to put the focus on those who have been left behind. I'll give you one quick example.

I am for raising the minimum wage a dollar an hour for those who most need the help at the bottom end of the ladder.

I believe it's time for the working women of America to have an equal day's pay for an equal day's work.

The other side actually has proposed—Governor Bush has actually proposed making the minimum wage increase optional state by state, so that states' rights would overcome minimum labor standards, so states could just opt out of a minimum wage increase. Well what is that all about? You know, you talk about—you talk about a reactionary lurch back to the past.

You know, we've always—for quite a while now, we've respected the idea of a national minimum wage.

And incidentally, when we talk about building up our economy, let's don't forget that we need an infrastructure and a transportation system

that's the best in the world—the best light rail, the best subways, the best buses, like the one Sonny's dad used to drive— because this will do more than create good jobs; it will help us break free of the dominance of big oil and foreign oil. The other side is hooked in with them, you know. And I believe that we need to develop our transportation system in a way that Rodney Slater has talked about, put more money in the transit system and light rail.

And when you're talking about infrastructure in the Information Age, obviously that means also investing in the best schools in the world. I believe it's time to start treating our teachers like the professionals that they are and reduce the class size and connect the classrooms to the Internet, and lift standards and accountability along with the new resources.

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Al Gore

Centennial Park

Atlanta, Georgia

August 10, 2000

Training Americans & Immigration

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You want schools that are the finest in the world. You want a job training program that's based on some of the great ideas that Roy Barnes is putting into place right here.

You want -- you want a dynamic economy. Let me tell you, the majority of the business leaders in our nation say the biggest obstacle is that they can't find enough people with the training and education that they need to fill these new jobs. It's gotten so bad that now there's a debate every year in the Congress on how to raise the immigration limits to bring in well-educated people from other countries to fill jobs that our people can't fill.

We welcome immigrants, don't get me wrong. We are stronger in each generation because of the strength and talent that is brought into this country. But I believe it's time for us to recognize that we have got to beef up and fix and reform and improve our own schools for the children of the immigrants, for all of the children who are born and educated here, so they can perform any job in the world in the next generation and in the next four years.

Now, finally, before I close I want to say that this is also a time for us to bring our people together. It is a time to break down barriers and write history. It is a time to recognize that we are the only people that are bound together, not by a common race or a common religion or a common ethnicity or a common national heritage, we are bound together

by a common devotion to a set of ideals, truths that we hold to be self-evident, that we're all created equal, that we've got a common destiny, that we're all Americans and we're in it together, one for all and all for one.

We have a chance in this election to make our country what we're supposed to be.

But it's going to take your help, and I ask for your support. I ask for your vote. I ask for your enthusiasm.

And I ask you -- and I ask you for one more thing that's hard for you to give. I ask you for one more thing that people hardly ever give anymore. I ask you to open your hearts and allow yourself to believe that we can do the right thing and be the better for it.

I ask you to rekindle the American spirit and reach out and embrace the highest common denominator of the human spirit. I ask you to make this country what it's supposed to be, by pushing away the fear of heartbreak and disappointment and instead doing what our founders did when they said, "We can do it. And we will do it."

Let's do it together. Let's win this election for the American future.

Al Gore

The United Auto Workers

Detroit, Michigan

August 11, 2000

Raising Minimum Wage & Ensuring Right to Organize

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But we've got work to do, because even though we've made progress, there are too many who have been left behind, there are too many who have lost their jobs. There is too much difficulty in the manufacturing sector. There is too much of a need for us to join together to stop some of the bad trends that have to be turned around. We've got to reach out to the ones that most need help.

For example, I'm for raising the minimum wage a dollar an hour for those who most need to be brought along into this prosperity.

And I want to invest our surpluses in health care and education and middle class tax cuts and a secure retirement.

This week I announced my running mate, Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. A good man. His father was a bakery truck driver and a small-store owner. And for all his public life, Joe Lieberman has stood with working families. And I want you to know this -- no ifs, ands, buts or any other kind of qualification -- in the Gore-Lieberman administration, we are going to be pro-union, pro-collective bargaining, pro-worker, pro-working family!

I want to fight for you.

The right to organize is a fundamental American right. In a Gore-Lieberman administration, we're not just going to defend the right to organize; we're going to strengthen the right to organize.

There are so many people out there who don't make what their

families need them to make, who don't have the individual power to go to the person who's in charge in the workplace and say, "I need more time with my kids. I need to make more per hour. I need safer, better working conditions." There are too many people who go and deliver that message, and they get a flat rejection or, more commonly, they feel like it's not even -- it's not even possible for them to consider going and delivering that message, because they're alone. They're powerless. There's too much against them.

But if and when a majority of their colleagues in that workplace decide that they want to exercise the legal rights that Americans have, if they choose, to organize together and bargain collectively, that right must never be taken away from them. They ought to have the chance to go together and say, "Here's what we are asking you for," and their right to bargain ought to be strengthened, because it's time to pass a law forbidding the use of permanent striker replacements in this country. That practice is wrong. It needs to be stopped.

You and I have seen situations in this nation where the workplaces are not safe. Maybe an electrical cord on a power tool is running through a pool of water. Maybe there's a machine that's been posing way too much risk to the people there. And again, that's a problem that can't be solved by an individual, and sometimes it's a problem that can't even be solved by bargaining. And that's why we need to protect OSHA. That's why you need an administration that will make workplace safety a priority, including ergonomics.

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Al Gore

Labor Day Event

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

September 4, 2000

Ensuring Employment & Raising the Minimum Wage

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And, you know, there's so many families who are represented here, and there a lot of people who are off work today and celebrating on Labor Day, but I want to take just a moment to tell you what Joe Lieberman and I have been doing for the last 22 hours.

We haven't had any sleep. We've been traveling all over this country and talking with people who are working on Labor Day. And last night late -- well, we started in Philadelphia, and we talked with the building trades over there, and we went to Flint, Michigan and talked with hospital workers. And late at night, about 1 a.m., we went to the General Motors truck plant and talked with the autoworkers.

And at 4 a.m., we were in Tampa, Florida, and we split up, and he went to get on a bakery truck like the one that his dad used to ride every night when he was putting his kids through school, and raising his family. And I went over to an all-night diner to talk with waitresses like my mother worked as a waitress in an all-night coffee shop when she was working her way through school, and becoming one of the first women to graduate from Vanderbilt Law School back in the 1930s.

And then we went over, and about 5 a.m. we had a great breakfast with the firefighters in Tampa. And we had a rally before 6 a.m., 1,000 people outside of that fire hall. And you know, it caused me to think of all the people who are working on Labor Day, and I want to take just a moment to thank a lot of the people that you don't often think about. I

want to thank all of the medics. I want to thank the law enforcement officers who are working today on Labor Day.

I want to thank the Secret Service and all of those who have made my trip possible. I want to thank the working press corps who are working on Labor Day. I want to thank all of those who have worked to make this event possible. You know, they're not home with their families, and so I want all of them to accept my personal thanks.

And I want to say to all of you, our country faces a big choice in this election year, and that's one of the reason we're all gathered. And I see these signs out here that remind me of how many organizations are represented, and how important these organizations are to your ability to get fair wages and good, decent works conditions and a safe workplace. And I want you to know that I'm going to fight for you and stand up for you, and Joe Lieberman is as well.

While I'm here in Pittsburgh, he traveled to Detroit. And I'm going from here to Louisville, and he's going to Toledo. And this, of course, marks the kickoff of the final phase of the campaign, the kickoff, traditionally, of the last two months.

And we've got an awful lot at stake, our economy, for example. You know, the other side has been saying that we're worse off today than we were eight years ago. I don't think so because working people have had better wages and there've been more jobs in the last eight years because we've done some things right.

You remember how bad it was eight years ago. The deficits were \$300 billion a year. The unemployment rate was high. We saw jobs being shipped overseas. We had all kinds of social problems getting worse. And thanks to you, we had a chance to bring some changes; and instead of the biggest deficits, we now have the biggest surpluses; and instead of a triple-dip recession, we've had a tripling of the stock market. Instead of

high unemployment, we've got the lowest African-American unemployment ever measured, the lowest Latino unemployment ever measured, 22 million new jobs, and strongest economy in the 224-year history of the United States of America.

But let me be clear: I am not satisfied. You ain't seen nothing yet. We've got a lot of work to do.

I am not asking you for your support on the basis of the economy we have. I'm asking for your support on the basis of the better, fairer, stronger economy that we're going to create together in the next four years.

I think it's time to raise the minimum wage \$1 an hour and have a living wage. I think it's time to fight for the families that most need help. And you know one of the things that means is figuring out among ourselves what we're going to do with this big surplus. Here we have the highest levels of personal wealth, especially at the top, that America's ever seen, and yet so many people have been left behind it is no time to bring up the ladder. Now is the time to ensure that our prosperity enriches not just a few, but all our families. Now is the time to keep balancing the budget to keep interest rates low and keep our economy strong, and then pay down the debt so our children don't have to carry that burden.

Al Gore

Gentex Corporation
Carbondale, Pennsylvania

September 7, 2000

Training for High-tech Jobs

Yesterday, we put out this plan called Prosperity for America's Families. It's a 200-page specific plan, filled with details of exactly how we can reach specific goals that will improve the quality of life for our country, for middle class families, for working families. And for those of you whose families use the Internet, you can go to algore.com and find all the specific details of this plan.

But I wanted to come here today to talk about one specific goal, and that is how we create those 10 million new high-skilled, high-tech jobs across the board -- in manufacturing, in services, across the board -- over these next four years.

And Anita's story really does illustrate the fact that hard work and ingenuity can make jobs available for the next generation that are attuned to the new challenges that we face.

You know, Peter's grandfather founded this company a little more than 100 years ago as a silk manufacturing company. They'd bring silk in from China and then -- and do all kind of stuff with it -- make it into yarn, right? Is that right?

And then over the years, the company changed and adapted to new technologies. Now you've got this high-tech process here. I was very impressed. There are computers all over this -- all over this facility. And making these optical lenses that are really very, very impressive. And you've changed in order to keep the jobs and upgrade the jobs.

And one of the ways you've done it is by offering training and lifelong

learning to the employees in this company, by making sure that you update your skills.

And in talking with your management, Bob and Pat and I were learning about how you offer about a week a year of training and in-depth learning for the average new employee. And for those who are in the higher skills end of it, like operating a CAD/CAM device, then there's even more training. And that's what we ought to see across the board.

But our nation ought to make it easier for companies to do that. It ought to make it easier for families to do that. That's one reason I want middle class tax cuts, and I don't want to squander the surplus on a giant tax cut for the wealthy at the expense of the middle class that stops our prosperity and progress. I want middle class tax cuts.

And I'll give you a specific example. I want to make most college tuition tax deductible so families can send their kids on to college. Absolutely. We need a national tuition savings plan and more Hope Scholarships.

And incidentally, we need to treat teachers like the professionals they are and have smaller class size and modernize the schools and make education the number one priority.

Today, this company shows that we're doing better in America and, in fact, although the other side in this presidential race likes to say that we were better off eight years ago than we are today, most people don't believe that because they remember the big deficits and the quadrupling of the debt and the high unemployment. And we've made some progress. And we've written a good chapter.

But now's the time to turn the page and write a new chapter. In fact, we've written 12 new chapters in this economic plan, Prosperity for America's Families.

And I want you to know what my feeling is: This election is not an

award for past performance. I'm not satisfied. I think we can do a lot better. We've got to do a lot better. So I say you ain't seen nothing yet. We're going to do a lot better.

We're going to make our economy stronger and better for middle class families, for working families.

I'm not asking any of you to vote for me on the basis of the economy we have. I'm asking you to support me and this agenda on the basis of the better, fairer, stronger economy that we can create together. And one of the ways we can create it is by learning some of the lessons that you can absorb right here at Gentex.

You know, this is a real example of what needs to be done for our families -- to support families, to support parents, to strengthen families. We've got to invest in education, health care, middle class tax cuts, a secure retirement. We have to make sure that our prosperity enriches not just a few, but all of our families.

We have to fight for people, not the powerful. We have to fight for the middle class. We have to fight for the families that are making mortgage payments and car payments and having trouble paying the bills and working harder and taking more than one job.

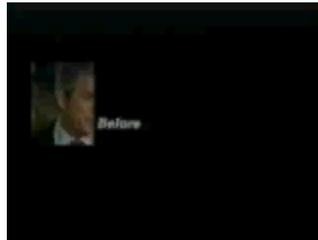
You're the ones I want to fight for. I want to make your lives better. And that's what this agenda is all about.

You're what this campaign is all about. I'm with you.

Al Gore

September 19, 2000

TV Ad: "National Minimum"



[Announcer]:

Before you look at George W. Bush's plans, look at his record. When the national minimum wage was raised to \$5.15 an hour, Bush kept the Texas minimum wage at \$3.35.

(Source: National Journal, 8/7/99; Dept. of Labor press release, 8/27/97)

When Congress passed a law to help states provide health insurance for kids, Bush opposed its expansion to 220,000 children in Texas.

(On screen: Source: Austin American-Statesman, 2/26/99)

And a federal judge had to step in, ruling Texas fails to provide adequate health care for children.

(U.S. District Court Opinions, 8/14/00)

George Bush: His real plans hurt real people.

(On screen: 1800thefacts.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)

Al Gore

October 11, 2000

TV Ad: "Aprons"



[Announcer]:

When the national minimum wage was raised to \$5.15 an hour, Bush did nothing and kept the Texas minimum wage at \$3.35.

(On screen: Source: National Journal, 8/7/99; Dept. of Labor, Press Release, 8/2/97)

Six times the Legislature tried to raise the minimum wage and Bush's inaction helped kill it.

(Source: Texas Legislature Online; www.capitol.state.tx.us)

Now Bush said he'd allow states to set a minimum wage lower than the federal standard.

(On screen: Source: Associated Press, 8/24/99)

Al Gore's plan: Make sure our current prosperity enriches not just a few but all families. Increase the minimum wage, invest in education, middle-class tax cuts and a secure retirement.

(On screen: 1800thefacts.com; Paid for by the Democratic National Committee)

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Job Training & Lifelong Education

Closing the Opportunity Gap

Forty years ago, the Democratic platform discussed a Missile Gap as a measurement of America's competitiveness around the world and our security here at home. Today, too many Americans face an Opportunity Gap - a lack of the skills they need to be competitive in the global economy and have career security in the workplace. The Opportunity Gap is also a chasm created by income disparity, discrimination by race and gender, and the abandonment of our inner cities.

Many of today's workers will need retraining over the next decade. Nearly ninety percent of companies say they already face a shortage of skilled workers. The Opportunity Gap is costing American workers good jobs at good wages - and it must be closed. Al Gore has proposed a broad set of initiatives to provide college education, lifelong learning, and ongoing skill development for all Americans.

College Education and Lifelong Learning for All

With Democratic leadership over the past eight years, the percentage of young people who are entering college has gone up by nearly 20 percent. In the Information Age, it is clear that a college education is more important than ever. The HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credit have opened the gates of college wider than ever before. Pell grants are at their highest level ever.

Now we need to do more. We should make a college education as universal as high school is today. Al Gore has proposed a new National Tuition Savings program to tie together state tuition savings programs in

more than 30 states so that parents can save for college tax-free and inflation-free. We propose a tax cut for tuition and fees for post-high school education and training that allows families to choose either a \$10,000 a year tax deduction or a \$2,800 tax credit.

In today's economy, education should not be a time in a person's life but a way of life. To keep up with the fast-moving, fast-changing economy, workers must have the ability to continue learning and upgrading their skills for a lifetime. The next great frontier in American education is dramatically expanding opportunities for lifelong learning, skill development, and training.

Democrats believe that every hardworking American should have the chance to use their best talents. That is why we support a major new commitment to expanding worker training and skill development, including the creation of national skills standards. Al Gore has called on companies and workers to build more partnerships for skill development. He has proposed incentives for states and employers to expand worker training. We should fund partnerships of employers, colleges, unions, and others that will connect workers to the training they need. We should create a new tax credit for employers who train their workers in the skills needed in the New Economy. We must also give new training allowances that will extend unemployment insurance for those who need time to finish their training courses. Al Gore has called for new 401(j) accounts - like the 401(k)'s which so many Americans use - that would let employers help their employees save tax free and use those savings for the lifelong learning for the employee or their spouse, or their children's college education. Al Gore has also called for a permanent tax exemption to encourage employers to provide tuition assistance benefits to their workers, and for expanding this exemption so that entire families can benefit from these tuition benefits as well.

Al Gore

The Democratic National Convention

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Ensuring Employment

Valuing Work

Democrats believe in hard work and we believe that work must pay. It is what has made America great. There is a basic bargain at the heart of the American story - hard work should be both required and rewarded. Democrats also believe that those who do work hard should not be stuck in place - they should get ahead. And those who work hard should have a voice in their workplace.

Supporting Working Families

Democrats know that workers' freedom to choose a voice at work is a fundamental American right that must never be threatened, never be obstructed, never be taken away. From the Industrial Age to the Information Age, unions have given working people the chance to improve their living standards and have a voice on the job. The Clinton-Gore Administration stopped the Team Act, defeated a national right-to-work law, and fought for the resources to enforce worker protections. Al Gore will protect our wage and hour laws, including the forty-hour workweek and overtime requirements, and stand firm in support of the Davis-Bacon act and the Service Contract act. He has also proposed reforming government contracting rules to ensure that taxpayer dollars do not go to companies that break basic labor laws. Democrats have always believed in making work pay.

We are fighting for a new ergonomic standard and whistle-blower protections. We have stood up for the National Labor Relations Board and fought to protect the right of working families to participate in the

political process when it was under attack.

Now we must go further - not just playing defense against misguided Republican attempts to set back the cause of worker's rights, but moving the ball forward. We need a new national law banning permanent striker replacement workers - so that workers' right to organize into a union and bargain with their employers are never compromised. While we have made the workplace the safest ever, we need to further increase workplace safety. We should stiffen penalties for employer interference with the right to organize and violations of other worker rights. We must also reform labor laws to protect workers' rights to exercise their voices and organize into unions by providing for a more level playing field between management and labor during organizing drives, and facilitating the ability of workers to organize and to bargain collectively.

Rewarding Work for All

Democrats believe in an economy that works for everyone and gives everyone a chance to work. We have made a good start by fighting for the Earned Income Tax Credit which has helped millions of American families work their way out of poverty. We won the battle for increasing the minimum wage.

Now we must do more. We must bring all Americans who are willing to work hard into the circle of prosperity by more fully extend the benefit of the Earned Income Tax Credit to working families, again raising the minimum wage, and giving American workers the skills they need to make it in today's economy. We will vigorously enforce protections against on-the-job discrimination, reassert our belief in an equal day's pay for an equal day's work, seek to prevent the exploitation of workers, and ensure that the nation's worker protection laws are enforced.

Democrats believe that one way we value and reward hard work is to modernize, strengthen, and sustain the nation's unemployment

compensation system - a bedrock protection against poverty for millions of workers and their families. Today, the system serves far fewer working families than in the past and many especially vulnerable workers - such as low wage workers, seasonal employees, contingent workers, and women - are especially likely to fall outside the system's protective safety net. Democrats believe we must fight to update and upgrade the nation's unemployment system, to stabilize its funding, extend eligibility to more workers, and improve benefits.

We know that even as the economy changes and expands, millions of workers will continue to labor in jobs that pay low wages and may not require significant education or skills. Many of these workers are women, people of color, or recent immigrants. These workers provide invaluable services to American society and their work has great dignity. Democrats are committed to ensuring that these workers - no less than their counterparts in more highly-skilled, better paid positions - are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness on the job. Democrats also believe that workers in temporary, part-time, and contract jobs should be treated fairly and earn the wages and benefits they deserve because of the jobs they do.

Technology - Bush

George W. Bush

July 20, 2000

TV Ad: "GeorgeWBush.com"



[Bush]:

Welcome to GeorgeWBush.com.

(Fast-paced music, highlights of new Web site, including streaming video of Bush saying, "I'm running for president of the United States.")

(On screen: georgewbush.com)

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Privacy and Secure Technologies

Government also has a responsibility to protect personal privacy, which is the single greatest concern Americans now have about the Information Revolution. Citizens must have the confidence that their personal privacy will be respected in the use of technology by both business and government. That privacy is an essential part of our personal freedom and our family life, and it must not be sacrificed in the name of progress. At the same time, consumers should have the benefit of new products, services, and treatments that result from the legitimate use of data with appropriate safeguards. We applaud the leadership already demonstrated in this regard by many outstanding businesses, which are ensuring individuals' privacy in various ways and promoting public education about the consumer's right to privacy.

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Technology and the New Economy

“Governments don’t create wealth. Wealth is created by Americans – by creativity and enterprise and risk-taking. The great engine of wealth has become the human mind – creating value out of genius.”

— George W. Bush

The innovation at the heart of our New Economy has become the greatest force for change all over the world. With information technology, people in bondage can taste freedom, and people in freedom can bond more securely with each other. People who used to work for others are now independent entrepreneurs. And citizens are drilling through layers of entrenched bureaucracy to directly access information and transact business.

Republicans have embraced this change, for it advances the central values of our party and our country: a reduced role for government, greater personal liberty, economic freedom, reliance on the market and decentralized decision-making. This revolution also suits our national character — rewarding creativity, hard work, tenacity, and a willingness to take risks. It empowers. This is America’s moment.

Republicans recognize that the role of government in the New Economy is to foster an environment where innovation can flourish. The Information Revolution is the product of the creative efforts and hard work of men and women in the private sector, and not of government bureaucrats. At the same time, we recognize the magnitude and pace of change require vigilance to make the most of its opportunities and to mitigate its possible difficulties. For what we have experienced thus far is

surely only the beginning of almost unimaginable growth, change, and more change. Let others be timid in the face of it, but let this country seize the opportunity.

The Republican Congress deserves great credit for what it has already done to fulfill its historic E-Contract with the American people:

The Internet Tax Freedom Act put a three-year moratorium on new Internet taxes to ensure that electronic commerce would not be smothered in its infancy.

An expanded visa program (H1-B) provided much of the highly skilled labor that makes rapid technological progress possible.

The Securities Litigation Reform Act, enacted by overriding a veto, is preventing trial lawyers from preying on new cutting-edge companies. The threat of abusive lawsuits must not be allowed to cripple the capital formation that will drive the Information Revolution.

A codified World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) agreement ensured that content providers are protected from foreign criminals.

Our extended research and development tax credit allows companies to innovate, when innovation is the name of the high tech game.

Deregulation of telecommunications, still in its early stages, shattered monopolies and opened the door to worldwide communication.

These initiatives are grounded in a steadfast commitment to open markets, to minimal regulations, and to reducing taxes that snuff out innovation — principles at the heart of the new economy and our party.

Our latest breakthrough, enacted only weeks ago, is a landmark commercial law granting electronic signatures used in the formation of contracts online the same legal validity as pen and ink signatures on paper. With this single stroke, business-to-business e-commerce will explode, paperwork costs will decline, convenience will increase, and consumers rack up another major victory.

The impact of the Internet on the daily workings of government to make it more responsive and citizen-centered is considered elsewhere in this platform. But Republicans welcome the Information Revolution to the political arena too. Democracy thrives on well-informed citizens, and now the public will have unprecedented access to the workings of government, including the voting records of their Members of Congress and the written opinions of judges, whose decisions will now be reviewable in the court of public opinion.

Where do we go from here?

First, commit to global markets and free trade. Internet curtains must not take the place of the Iron Curtain through tariffs, duties, or taxes on Internet access. We call for a permanent ban on access taxes and an extension of the current moratorium on new and discriminatory taxes, which shall not prohibit a state from collecting taxes that are currently authorized by law.

Second, maintain a highly educated work force so that continued progress need not depend on imported personnel. Like Governor Bush, we have made this a vital part of our education program that is detailed elsewhere in this platform. Instead of burdening schools with red tape and narrow government programs, we will give them maximum flexibility in using federal education technology dollars to meet their specific needs — whether it be for computers, teacher training, software development, or systems integration.

Third, speed up the research and innovation that drive technological progress, along the lines of our proposed tax reforms, National Institute of Health (NIH) funding, and a \$20 billion increase in the research and development budget of the Defense Department.

Fourth, protect the technology industry from modern day pirates at home and abroad: both those who violate copyrights and those who loot

by litigation.

Restrain the hand of government so that it cannot smother or slow the growth of worldwide commerce and communication through the Internet.

In addition, we must encourage government at all levels to work with the private sector to ensure that the Internet must be a medium for everyone. The old liberal approach — using the threat of stifling regulations to redistribute wealth and opportunity — will work no better than it ever has, and perhaps much worse, in the new economy. The Republican Party embraces a creative, incentive-based, public/private approach and a Republican president will use the influence of his office to urge high-tech philanthropy, with such initiatives as Governor Bush's plan to create and strengthen more than 2,000 community technology centers every year — centers which provide such services as free Internet access and technology skills training. The prosperity of our New Economy provides unprecedented opportunities for philanthropic giving.

What holds true for the Internet applies as well to other areas of scientific advance, from biotechnology to chemistry. These fields require enormous infusions of capital, as well as regulatory flexibility by government. The federal government must refocus and reinvigorate its role in promoting cutting-edge, basic research, and the tax code must foster research and development. These policies will increase the pace of technological developments by de-emphasizing the direct role of government while strengthening private-public partnerships and the role of the private sector. In addition, the Republican Party will remain committed to America's leadership in space research and exploration. We will ensure that this Nation can expand our knowledge of the universe, and with the support of the American people, continue the exploration of Mars and the rest of the solar system. We consider space travel and

space science a national priority with virtually unlimited benefits, in areas ranging from medicine to micro-machinery, for those on earth. Development of space will give us a growing economic resource and a source of new scientific discoveries. The potential benefits of new science and technology to the American people, indeed to all humanity, are incalculable and can only be hastened by the international free market in ideas that the Information Revolution has created.

Technology - Gore

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Investing in Innovation

Technology is no longer just wondrous gadgets, it is an ever more integral part of our economy - and an enormous part of what has been driving economic growth. We need to harness technology's power and make sure America stays on the cutting-edge.

That means continuing to invest in experimentation, exploration, and innovation. Democrats recognize that a sustained public investment in long term basic research has been the foundation for America's scientific and technological leadership. That's why both public and private investment in research and development is crucial to sustaining our prosperity.

On the public side, Democrats believe in doubling the current levels of investment in information technology research and biomedical research and supporting the continued development of the Next Generation Internet - moving 1,000 times faster than today's Internet. We believe in helping universities and federal laboratories become centers of innovation that support and catalyze private sector growth. We also believe in the use of creative public-private partnerships that will, when appropriate, help bring new products to market faster. We continue to support technology transfer - forming partnerships between industry and government that can help ensure that American companies and workers develop the technological tools needed to compete in tomorrow's global markets.

In the private sector, Democrats believe in supporting the startups, the small businesses, and the entrepreneurs that are making the New Economy go. This means making permanent the Research and Experimentation tax credit and expanding it to make it partially refundable so that small businesses can use it more easily. It also means keeping cyberspace a duty-free zone so that American companies can sell goods around the world and insist that other countries refrain from actions that impede commerce. To expand technology's worldwide potential as a force for good, Al Gore has advanced a bold vision for a new Global Information Infrastructure - a network of networks that sends messages and images at the speed of light, across every continent - to expand access to phone service and communications, further improve the delivery of education and health care, and create new jobs and industries.

Strengthening small business is a vital component of economic innovation, job creation, and supporting entrepreneurship. Small businesses have accounted for more than 90 percent of the 22 million new jobs created with Democratic leadership. The Democratic Party is committed to sustaining and adding to that level of growth of small businesses, including home based businesses. Democrats believe that strengthening small businesses is a vital component of strategies to create opportunity and community economic development. We will build on the tremendous progress of the Clinton-Gore Administration in modernizing the Small Business Administration and improving access to the Federal marketplace. We will fight to reform and strengthen programs to combat discrimination against women and minority entrepreneurs, including federal procurement, because the playing field is still not level.

Americans generate more new technologies, new inventions, and

more creative works of software and entertainment than the citizens of any other country in the world. American creativity contributes greatly to improving the quality of daily life, helps us work more efficiently, and enriches our national culture. America's laws and policies must be tailored and equipped to nurture and advance this unique aspect of our national character. This means we must ensure that sound patent and copyright laws motivate our inventors and creators to pursue their vision. Internationally, we must work to build support for strong intellectual property laws among the community of nations, including in trade agreements. We must take all steps necessary to secure effective enforcement of those laws - at home and abroad - to ensure that others do not steal intellectual property through piracy and other forms of theft.

Democrats know that technological innovation is critical to maintaining a strong manufacturing sector as we enter the Information Age. Manufacturing is a principal engine of productivity growth, a provider of jobs that pay family-supportive wages, and a significant source of exports for paying our way in the world economy. Al Gore and the Democratic Party will fight to keep America's basic industries the most competitive in the world.

Regulation of Business - Bush

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Common Sense in Regulation

Effective government requires regulation for health, safety, and other concerns. By the same token, regulation requires regular review — for efficiency, economy, and plain common sense. That Republican model of regulatory reform is a good fit for an Information Age economy. It will replace a bureaucratic mentality clicking along at a Morse Code pace. We will use the advance of science and information technology to:

Target the most serious risks to health, safety, and the environment, then put regulatory resources where they best serve the public, not politics.

Make sound science, not ideological whim, the basis for regulation, with peer-reviewed risk assessments and full disclosure.

Require periodic review of existing regulations, to strengthen where necessary and change where obsolete.

Require agencies to disclose the cost to consumers and small businesses of any proposed regulations.

Let the American people know the full price they pay for government regulations, through a new regulatory budget that explains the likely cost for meeting regulatory requirements.

Use cost-benefit analyses of regulations to develop alternatives to the outdated command-and-control attitude of recent years.

Retrain civil servants to work with those affected by regulation rather than dictating to them.

The current administration has repeatedly evaded the normal regulatory process through executive orders, some of dubious legality. Withdrawing these orders should be a priority of a new administration dedicated to the rule of law.

We oppose and will work to end taxpayer supported grants for projects and programs that promote religious bigotry in America.

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Small Business – Where Prosperity Starts

Small businesses are the underlying essence of our economy. Small businesses create most of the new jobs and keep this country a land of opportunity. They have been the primary engines of economic advance by American women, whose dynamic entry into small business in recent years has accounted for much of the nation's growth. Small businesses generate more than half the gross domestic product. Their willingness to give people a chance, and their ability to train individuals new to the work force, made welfare reform the success that it is. They deserve far better treatment from government than they have received. We will provide it through many of the initiatives explained elsewhere in this platform: lower tax rates, ending the death tax, cutting through red tape, legal and product liability reform, and the aggressive expansion of overseas markets for their goods and services.

We will end the harassment of small businesses by federal agencies. In the case of OSHA, we will withdraw its proposed ergonomics standard, ban its bureaucracy from the homes of telecommuting workers, and change the agency from an adversary to a partner for safer productivity. We will halt the IRS discrimination against independent contractors and, in order to guard against unwise regulation, will include the agency in the current procedures of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

Providing health insurance is a major challenge for small business owners. Almost 60 percent of uninsured workers are either employed by small business or are self-employed. That is compelling reason to

immediately allow 100 percent deductibility of health insurance premiums and let small businesses to band together, across State lines, to purchase insurance through association health plans.

Regulation of Business - Gore

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Protecting American Consumers

As our science and technology advance we must work hard to protect our oldest and most cherished values. That's why Al Gore, while supporting the completion of the Human Genome Project, has championed legislation to ban genetic discrimination. While fighting to expand Internet access, he has led the Administration's efforts to give parents, schools, and communities effective tools to protect children from inappropriate content on-line. In particular, Al Gore has focused on the challenge of protecting Americans' personal privacy on-line as well as the medical and financial information that can all too easily be intercepted and abused by others.

Al Gore has called for an Electronic Bill of Rights for this electronic age - including the right to choose whether personal information is disclosed; the right to know how, when, and how much of that information is being used; the right to see it yourself; and the right to know if is accurate.

We must protect not only our privacy, but the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the water we drink. That's why Democrats believe we ought to have a modern, science-based food safety system, including meaningful food labeling that also discloses where our food comes from, and that communities should have the right to know about toxins that are released into the air and water.

Farm Policy - Bush

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

***Party Platform: American Agriculture and Rural America in the
Global Economy***

Agriculture is at the heart of the U.S. economy. The food and fiber sector accounts for 13 percent of the nation's economic output and employs, directly or indirectly, more than 22 million people. When agriculture is hurting, the entire country aches. In all our policies and programs, the Republican party is guided by two principles. First, to farmers and ranchers, nothing beats production and sales at a good price. As long as they have truly fair and open domestic and foreign markets, they can do for themselves far better than anything government can do for them. Second, they want to produce what makes sense on their own private property, not what official Washington thinks should be grown there. Under Republican leadership, government will never again run our family farms.

While these are not the best of times for farmers and ranchers, the hopeful promise of our Freedom to Farm Act, which finally replaced decades of controls by a federal bureaucracy, has been limited by events at home and abroad. Farmers were promised that, along with the end of governmental protection for commodities markets, there would be reforms in tax, trade, and regulatory policy. Opposition from the current administration minimized progress in all three areas. As a result, American farmers were hard pressed to deal with the challenge of increased global production and slack demand in Asia. The ineptitude of

current U.S. trade policy only made it worse.

For American agriculture, prosperity depends in large measure on expansion of global markets. Our farmers already export some \$54 billion in products and commodities every year. For them, for the aspirations of their families and the dreams of their children, the opening of foreign markets is essential. Governor Bush understands that. That's why he has asked for restoration of presidential fast-track negotiating authority, the key to forceful trade negotiations abroad. And it's why he's determined to open the China market for America's farmers and ranchers. It's why he's called for the U.S. to demand, in the next round of global trade talks, the complete elimination of agricultural export subsidies and tariffs. It's why he will fight the European Community's outrageous restrictions against imports of U.S. crops and livestock. And it's why he has pledged to exempt food exports from any new trade sanctions.

Results will take time, and so, looking toward the Farm Bill of the year 2002, we call for immediate action on a safety net that will give farmers the means to manage cyclical downturns. This year's reform of the Federal Crop Insurance Act by the Republican Congress was a good start. In its wake, we propose: Emergency assistance to facilitate the transition to a market-driven regime.

A farm income savings plan: tax-deferred accounts to soften fluctuations in farm earnings.

Total repeal of the death tax.

Immediate 100 percent deductibility for health insurance costs.

A one-time exemption from capital gains tax on the sale of farms.

Regulatory relief.

We reaffirm our strong support for agricultural research, including biotech and biomass research, and for a permanent research and

development tax credit. We likewise support the ethanol tax credit, which is good for both the environment and for farmers. Our program of regulatory reform has special relevance to farming, which bears an annual regulatory burden of \$20 billion. Every farm family has better uses for that money. Apart from costs, there are grave questions about the impact of the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act. Its implementation must not disrupt farmers' access to safe crop protection products. We reaffirm our support for cooperative partnerships between federal, state, and local governments and private landowners for the conservation of our soil, water and biological resources on private land. The federal government should work with the states to adopt water quality standards that rely on the best science and implementation of best management practices, including addressing hypoxia and runoff issues.

We call for the elimination of outdated laws that hamper the adaptation of agriculture to the demands and opportunities of a new century. Futures trading should be deregulated. Regional restrictions on dairy products that drive up consumer prices and penalize productive farmers should be ended. We commend the livestock industry for its efforts to ensure accurate and open price reporting to ensure a competitive market.

There is much more to rural America than agriculture, ranching, and forestry. The kind of economic development that generates family-sustaining jobs is critical to small towns and rural communities. We recognize the special challenges they face in working for good schools, accessible health care, decent housing, safe drinking water and waste disposal, and serviceable transportation. The federal government should be an active partner with state and local entities in that process, especially in advancing the availability of the Internet and modern telecommunications technology in rural America.

Farm Policy - Gore

Al Gore

Iowa

September 27, 2000

Fighting for Reform of the Estate Tax

My friends, I came here to Iowa today to talk about one of the issues that is going to be decided by the election just 40 days and 8 hours and 20 minutes from now. That's when the polls close here in Iowa. And incidentally, Iowa played the crucial role in the caucuses this year. And this election is so close, Iowa can play the decisive role in the general election this year, and I need your help on November seventh.

But this election is not about me, it's not about my opponent. It's not really about politics or personalities. It is about priorities. It is about what kind of country we want to have in the years ahead. We have some successes to celebrate in America today. Just yesterday, the new statistics showed the poverty rate has gone down again and the median income for families has gone up above \$40,000 for the first time.

And, you know, you look back over the last eight years and there has been some progress. I think our opponents are wrong when they say we were a whole lot better off eight years ago than we are today. They are forgetting about \$300 billion annual budget deficits. The debt that was quadrupled in just over a decade, the high unemployment rate. And thanks to Iowa, you gave Bill Clinton and me a chance to bring some changes that have resulted in -- instead of the biggest deficits, now, we have the biggest surpluses. Instead of a triple-dip recession, we've had a tripling of the stock market. And instead of high unemployment, we have the lowest African-American and Latino unemployment ever measured.

Twenty-two million new jobs, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the strongest economy in the 224-year history of the United States of America.

But I am not satisfied. You ain't seen nothing yet. We are going to make it better still. This election is not an award for past performance. This election is not one about the past. I am not asking anybody to vote for me on the basis of the economy we have. I am asking for your support on the basis of the better, fairer, stronger economy that we are going to create together over the next four years. With your help, we are going to do much better.

I think it is time, for example, to end the so-called Freedom to Farm law, which is hurting farmers all across Iowa and America. We need a safety net that works for farmers and enables them earn a good income, to keep the farms in the families. We need reform of the estate tax for farmers and small business people. And we need to keep creating jobs. We need a prosperity that enriches not just the few, but all of our families. It's time to fight for the middle class families.

And you know, when I say this is a question of priorities, the priorities on the other side are very different from ours. They would squander the surpluses on a giant tax cut for the wealthy that would come at the expense of the middle class, that would end our prosperity and progress. Almost half of all the benefits in their tax cut plan on the other side go to the wealthiest one percent. I will never support a tax plan like that. I am for middle class tax cuts. I think the tax cuts ought to go to the people who have the hardest time paying taxes, the people who have car payments, and mortgage payments and are making ends meet and have been doing right by their kids. You are the ones that deserve tax cuts.

And, you know, we have also got to recognize that health care is now

a great challenge for millions of families across America.

...

Al Gore

Democratic National Convention 2000

Los Angeles, California

Party Platform: Rural America

...

In rural America, we have the opportunity to create a rural renewal on our nation's farms with improved transportation and infrastructure, better access to capital and technology, reduced concentration in agribusiness, and an expansion of new markets for our crops, and strengthening our ability to compete in world markets. The Internet can break down barriers of geography and isolation and bring the rural economy into the new economy. Farmers should receive incentives to conserve soil and improving farming and forestry techniques. The Republican Freedom to Farm Act has resulted in years of low prices and necessitated billion dollar bailouts. It is misguided and must be changed. Family farmers who work hard and smart should be able not only to survive but to thrive. Democrats will strengthen, not shred, the safety net for family farmers; we will open markets abroad for them. And we will not turn our backs on rural communities; we will work to ensure that they share in the new prosperity we are building for all of America.

Energy - Bush

George W. Bush

Cleveland, Ohio

June 28, 2000

Gas Prices

My opponent believes they ought to extend the royalty moratorium on deep gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. The price of natural gas is what is stimulating exploration. The price of natural gas is pretty high now. In other words, my opponent is giving major oil companies a huge tax break. I believe that the royalty moratorium ought to happen when the price declines. We ought not to have moratoriums when the prices are high. I look forward to hearing his explanation as to why big gas producers ought to be given a royalty tax break.

Al Gore yesterday evidently said that he never made comments about raising prices of gasoline. Yet, in his book, *Earth in the Balance*, he advocated higher taxes on fuel use and he supported the BTU tax, which would raise gasoline prices on people. When you tax energy, it raises the cost and he advocated, strongly advocated, two such measures, and now that the political heat is on, he's changing his tune. When he wrote or advocates for raising taxes and raising gas prices and he denies he ever did that, this is another example of when he doesn't know what the meaning of raise is.

George W. Bush

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

September 20, 2000

The Need for Conservation

...

We need an energy policy. I think we need more domestic exploration like in Alaska.

Alaska -- we need to open up Anwar in Alaska, and I'm absolutely convinced we can explore Anwar in an environmental-friendly way. I believe we've got the technology necessary to do so. Our natural gas business, hopefully, will flourish, because natural gas is not only a clean-burning fuel, it is also a fuel that is not prone to pricing pressures of OPEC, for example, it's hemispheric in nature. Gas is really hard to transport from overseas to America, but it can move throughout our hemisphere in a free way.

I talked to President-elect Vicente Fox about the issue of figuring out how Mexico can explore more for natural gas, for the bigger supply for gas. Those are long-term ideas. Hopefully, better conservation measures will develop in the marketplace, conservation measures for automobiles. There has been good progress made for mileage in our automobiles, and the best the automobile industry can do, and continue to develop more fuel efficient cars. I know we can do a good job of working with our coal industry to make sure that the coal-burning plants have got the proper technologies to keep our air clean. That's the long-term solutions, or longer-term solutions.

The short-term solution is to remind our friends overseas who their friend is. The short-term solution for gas prices...

It takes a while to bring production on stream, but there is

production on stream now. And it is so important for our nation to remind friends overseas that ours is an important market, but ours is also -- and ours is also an important friendship. The best way to immediately affect the price of refined product is for the supply of crude oil to be increased in the world market, because refined product reflects the price of crude. And obviously, the more crude there is relative to demand, the more likely it is the price of crude will drop.

...

George W. Bush

Cleveland, Ohio

September 21, 2000

Strategic Petroleum Reserve

Our own domestic production of crude oil is at the lowest level in almost 50 years, since 1954. We have no comprehensive energy policy.

Today my opponent, in response to public outcry, proposed that our nation tap into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That's bad public policy. The Strategic Reserve is an insurance policy meant for a sudden disruption of our energy supply or for war. The Strategic Reserve should not be used as an attempt to drive down oil prices right before an election. It should not be used for short-term political gain at the cost of long-term national security.

Mr. Gore is not heeding the advice of members of his own administration and the head of the Federal Reserve Board. In a memo written earlier this month, Secretary of Treasury Lawrence Summers, a member of President Clinton's Cabinet, warned that he and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan believe opening the Strategic Reserve would be a major and substantial policy mistake.

The vice president seemed to recognize the wisdom of this advice just last winter, when he opposed dipping into the reserve. Then, he noted that OPEC could easily counter that action. All they would have to do -- this is the vice president's word -- would be to cut back a little bit on the supply, he said, and they would wipe out any impact from the release of oil from that reserve. Now that we are 47 days away from the election, he's changed his mind and is ignoring his own advice.

America has no plan to reduce our reliance on foreign oil. And my opponent doesn't seem to have any plan to make us less dependent on

overseas production.

As president let me tell you what I'd like to do: aggressively explore for oil and natural gas on our own continent. I believe we need to open up ANWR, which is in Alaska, and believe we can do so in an environmentally friendly way. That we need to expand refining capacity in the United States. The more refined products that are produced, the better it will be for the consumer. That we need to expand electric generating capacity in the United States of America. The more capacity there is to generate electricity, the better off -- the better it is for consumers. That we need to support hydroelectric projects throughout the country, renewable sources of energy that are clean to produce. And on the foreign policy front, we need to work with our friends and allies in OPEC, as well as energy-producing countries in our own hemisphere, to ensure greater stability in our oil markets and energy markets.

I don't believe the role of government's to create wealth, but an environment in which people are willing to risk capital. I also believe government ought to trust individuals. And so when you hear my discussions today about what I intend to do for America, I want you to hear inherent in my philosophy -- in my policies is this philosophy: That I trust people. I trust people to make the right decisions for their families; I trust people to make the right decisions when it comes to health care; I trust people when it comes to make the right decisions with their own money; and I trust people to make the right decisions when it comes to managing retirement accounts.

George W. Bush

Saginaw, Michigan

September 29, 2000

"A Comprehensive National Energy Policy"

Everywhere I've traveled this great country, I've found Americans worried about energy. Motorists are concerned about what they have to pay at the pump. Homeowners, especially here in the Midwest and in the Northeast, are worried about the cost of heating their homes this winter. In California and elsewhere, small business owners and families alike are seeing their electricity bills skyrocket.

In Michigan and other states, the hardships are real and growing. Many people here heat their homes with natural gas and propane. Today, at the wellhead, natural gas costs twice as much as last year. And affordable energy is vital to Michigan's great economy - with its automobile manufacturing base and a growing high tech sector.

The situation is critical for our nation. President Clinton warns of a possible recession. His fears could be well placed. Our nation has had three recessions in the last generation - and each one was tied to an energy shock. After seven and a half years in office, and four months before departing, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore have begun to grasp a problem that has been years in the making.

This administration tries to take credit for our economy - but they have forgotten what makes it run. Even today - in our new, high-tech economy - America runs on oil and gas and coal gained from the earth, and from water held behind our dams.

In fact, the New Economy has made us more reliant on these sources. Six years ago, many Americans had never used the Internet. Today, many are, and we think of our New Economy as quiet and far

removed from the Industrial Age. In some ways it is. Yet, today the equipment needed to power the Internet consumes eight percent of all the electricity produced in the United States. Over half of that electricity comes from the burning of coal, and about 15 percent comes from natural gas.

Our nation uses about 20 million barrels of oil a day, and the need only grows. No matter how advanced our economy might be, no matter how sophisticated our equipment becomes - for the foreseeable future, we will still depend on fossil fuels.

Against this background, our country has a great and urgent need for a comprehensive energy policy, with leadership from the president himself. Without a long-term strategy to ensure steady, reliable supplies of energy, we put at risk our economy and the way of life it supports.

Today, America has no energy policy - as the secretary of energy himself reminded us recently. He admitted that the Clinton-Gore administration was "caught napping" when fuel prices began to rise. This is a good description- and it took an election to wake them up.

Since this administration took office, America's need for oil has increased by 14 percent. Over the same period, our imports of foreign oil have increased by more than a third. Never before has our country been more dependent on foreign supplies.

Today we import 56 percent of our oil. In 20 years, on our current path, that figure could be as high as two-thirds. Meanwhile, our own production of crude oil is at the lowest level in 50 years. And our refining capacity has not kept pace with demand.

Let me put this plainly: oil consumption is increasing. Our production is dropping. Our imports of foreign oil are skyrocketing. And this administration has failed to act.

As a result, America, more than ever, is at the mercy of foreign

government and cartels - at the mercy of big foreign oil.

On the Clinton/Gore watch, the American government has lost credibility with OPEC nations, including our Gulf War allies. We fought a war in defense of some of these countries - and, today, our standing with them is low, our needs are ignored.

On the Clinton/Gore watch, Saddam Hussein's Iraq has become a major supplier of oil to America. This means that one of our worst international enemies is gaining more and more control over America's economic future.

Now, just weeks before an election, this administration, in a calculated political move, has decided to tap crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Their plan calls for the release of thirty million barrels - about 36 hours worth of consumption in the U.S. economy.

At best, we merely swap slightly lower prices before the election for higher prices after November 7. But releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve also leaves our country even more vulnerable to foreign suppliers, including Saddam Hussein. Every barrel of the Strategic Reserve we release today for political reasons is one less barrel we have for threats to our security. The Strategic Reserve is meant for a foreign war or major disruption in supply, not for national elections; it is a Petroleum Reserve, not a political reserve.

The administration's neglect of oil has been compounded by its neglect of natural gas. Millions of businesses and homes rely on natural gas.

Michigan is the sixth largest consumer of natural gas. The administration claims to support it because natural gas burns clean.

But this administration has restricted natural gas exploration, despite the fact that our nation is rich in natural gas. And the administration has made it harder to deliver natural gas, delaying some

of the nation's biggest pipeline projects - projects to provide power and heating for the Midwest and the Northeast.

My opponent says he is for natural gas - he just doesn't like people to find it or move it to where it is needed.

Even as they pay more for gas and oil, many Americans, especially in California, are also facing record-high electric bills and brownouts. Our New Economy is demanding more electricity - and we are having a hard timekeeping up.

Our nation needs more sources of power. Yet the Clinton/Gore administration is consistently hostile to our existing sources of power. They overburden our coal industry with regulations and litigation. Hydroelectric power provides over a quarter of electricity for California - but the Vice President refuses to tell us whether he will breach dams, and shut down this clean source of power.

The administration seems never to have concerned itself with the domestic energy supply, except to tax, regulate, and therefore diminish it. The Vice President likes electric cars - he just doesn't like making electricity. In speeches, he calls autoworkers his friends. In his book, he declares the engines they make an enemy.

This is the record of seven and a half years - a record of inattention, misplaced priorities, and last-minute ploys. It will fall to the next administration to repair this damage and reverse this course. We must begin where the need is greatest, and provide immediate assistance to those least able to afford heating oil. Congress provided \$600 million in emergency funds for crises like the one we face today. But \$155 million of those funds remain unspent, and they should be released. The president should provide this money to those who need it. For the future, I am also proposing that any federal royalties collected from oil and gas production above certain price thresholds will be dedicated to provide

help to low-income Americans.

We must make sure that short-term supply problems do not adversely affect Americans and threaten our economy. In the future, to ensure that heating-oil supplies are available when needed, I support the creation of a Home Heating Oil Reserve. This reserve will blunt the impact of future shortages - temporarily increasing supply in time of need.

And when those stocks fall short, I will require the Department of Energy to notify Congress and make specific recommendations. In the future, no administration should be caught napping when supplies are low.

These steps will help consumers confront an urgent, short-term need.

But our goal is not just to manage crisis, it is to avoid crisis in the future. Our nation must actively build its long-term energy security.

First, I will make energy security a priority of my foreign policy.

I will use the tools of diplomacy to increase the flow of crude oil from foreign suppliers. I will rebuild American influence and credibility with the members of OPEC, and with nations in the Persian Gulf. Many of those relationships have faltered in recent years. I would remind our friends in the Persian Gulf that our relationships are not merely commercial, but strategic - they own the oil, and America offers its protection. In the end, it is America that protects the peace, America that safeguards their independence.

I will build strong relationships with energy-producing countries in our own hemisphere. I will invite the governments of Canada and Mexico to join in developing a North American Energy Policy - a policy rooted in the principles of free trade and the free flow of energy across our borders. I will also support energy exploration in non-OPEC nations - places like

the Caspian Sea basin and Western and Southern Africa - to help diversify the world's energy resources.

Second, I will encourage more energy exploration and production here at home, while protecting the environment.

We should open a small fraction of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for responsible oil and gas exploration -- exploration that will be environmentally sound. The Vice President says he would rather protect this Refuge than gain the energy, but this is a false choice. We can do both -taking out energy, and leaving only footprints. Critics of increased exploration and production ignore the remarkable technological advances in the last 10 years that have dramatically decreased the environmental impact of oil and gas exploration.

With the same concerns in mind, I will ask the Department of Energy, working with leading environmental and conservation groups, to identify other federal lands that can be opened to environmentally sound exploration for oil and natural gas.

I will support new pipelines. Gas pipelines are essential to America's energy future, and we must build them without sacrificing the environment, public health or safety. Within these parameters, we will require federal agencies to streamline the regulatory process for pipeline approval, which in some cases has taken over three years.

We must also expand our refining capacity by addressing regulatory hurdles. The oil we pump from the ground can't be put into our cars or furnaces. First it has to be refined - and today, every refinery in America is running flat-out. Unless we expand our refinery capacity, we will be relying more and more on foreign countries to provide us with gasoline and heating oil. Third, to keep pace with America's growing demands, I will promote the production of electricity.

Our country has abundant supplies of coal. If we can overcome the

environmental challenges of coal-fired plants, we will be much closer to energy security. Already there is progress - overall emissions from the seplants are down one-third since 1970. To build on that progress, my administration will commit two billion dollars over the next decade to fund research into "clean coal" technology.

Another environmentally sensible source of electrical power is the hydroelectric dam, which is clean, reliable, and provides low cost energy. In the Pacific Northwest, I oppose the breaching of dams.

I support the deregulation of electricity - which we have done successfully in Texas. This provides more choice and competition, to the benefit of the consumer. We are meeting increasing demand. Competition will keep a downward pressure on prices. Other states are also deregulating their markets. But the federal government sometimes slows this process. Federal deregulation would make electricity more reliable, and promote competition. I support it.

Fourth, to enhance America's long-term energy security, we must continue developing renewable sources of energy. The deregulation law I signed in Texas also requires the production of 2,000 megawatts of new renewable energy by 2009. Texas will soon be the largest market for renewable energy in America. Promoting renewal energy is a goal all America should share.

When we open the Alaskan reserve to exploration, I will dedicate up-front funds received from energy companies - called "bid bonuses" - to be earmarked for basic research into alternative energy sources, such as solar, wind and bio mass. And I will propose investing every dollar of the production royalties from ANWR in conservation efforts. If estimates are borne out, this could provide hundreds of millions of dollars in conservation resources every year.

Fifth, as we promote electricity and renewable energy, we will work

to make our air cleaner. With the help of Congress, environmental groups and industry, we will require all power plants to meet clean air standards in order to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, mercury and carbon dioxide within a reasonable period of time. And we will provide market-based incentives, such as emissions trading, to help industry achieve the required reductions.

In Texas, we passed one of the toughest laws in the nation to clean up so called "grandfathered utilities" under the Clean Air Act. My opponent calls for voluntary reductions in such emissions. In Texas we've done better -with mandatory reductions, and I believe the nation can do better. I believe that we can develop our natural resources and protect our environment. I believe in the promise of renewable energy. But I also recognize that renewable energy represents less than 4 percent of our energy needs. As Governor of Texas, I have required some of the most significant increases in renewable energy in the country. But I recognize we still must rely on other sources.

So America must have an energy policy that plans for the future, but meets the needs of today. Here, as elsewhere, the voters have a clear choice. Here, as elsewhere, the contrast is stark. My plan opens the door to more energy, to fuel a growing economy, and a new economy. We take the path of exploration, and innovation, and national self-reliance.

My opponent takes a different path. In a long Washington career, he has supported higher energy taxes and higher energy prices; more regulation and more central controls. In 1993, he cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate to raise gasoline taxes. He is proud of that vote, and everything else he has done to place limits on energy. That year, he wanted an even greater tax -- the BTU tax -- one that his own administration figured would cost the typical consumer \$320 a year.

All this comes from a certain view of the world. My opponent believes

the consumption of energy is the problem, and must be discouraged - by taxes and regulations. It helps explain why he has never made energy production a priority. It is the reason he views American oil producers as adversaries, and the automobile as a threat.

These arguments are familiar. We have heard them since at least the 1970s. And, at the end of that decade came an answer. In the face of another energy crisis, and at the end of another administration, Ronald Reagan said: "America must get to work producing more energy. Large amounts of oil and natural gas lie beneath our land ... untouched because the present administration seems to believe the American people would rather see more regulation, more taxes, and more controls than more energy. Our problems are acute and chronic; yet all we hear from those in positions of leadership are the same tired proposals for more government tinkering, more meddling, and more control. Can anyone look at the record of this administration and say, 'Well done?'"

That was Ronald Reagan, running for president in 1980. Today we might ask the same question about the present administration. They have had seven and a half years to develop a sound energy policy. They have had every chance to avoid the situation that confronts us today. And now they have nothing but excuses, bad ideas, and - as the clock runs out - one last ploy, opening the strategic reserve.

We are paying a steep price for seven and a half years without an energy policy. Americans are concerned about the staying power of our prosperity; more immediately, they are concerned about paying their bills in the winter to come. But before the cold of December comes November, and one day of decision. On Election Day, we can put our country on a new and better course.

George W. Bush

Pontiac, Michigan

October 13, 2000

Energy Security

I'm pleased to be here today, and to be joined by my good friends, Governors Bob Taft, Frank Keating, Don Sundquist, and of course our host, Governor John Engler, who had a birthday yesterday. Thanks to his strong leadership over the last decade, the people of Michigan have better jobs, better schools, and a better quality of life.

He's balanced the budget, set the right priorities, and still managed to reduce taxes 31 times. He's an example for fellow governors across America. And he's someone I'm proud to call a friend. Every time I visit Michigan, I see the spirit of enterprise, the skill, the ability to change and improve that make our economy the envy of the world. Some people in Washington, D.C. have been taking credit for the strong economy. That just shows they've been in Washington too long. The real credit for our prosperity goes to American workers and American entrepreneurs.

The same people in Washington also seem to have forgotten what makes the economy run. Even today -in our new, high-tech economy - America runs on the oil and gas and coal we gain from the earth, and from water held behind our dams.

Affordable energy is vital to Michigan's great economy - with your automobile manufacturing base and a growing high tech sector. It's vital to people in every walk of life who depend on their cars and trucks. Here in Michigan and other states, people are concerned about the cost of heating their homes this winter. Oil and gas prices are at historic highs. Today, at the wellhead, natural gas costs twice as much as a year ago. President Clinton has acknowledged that these problems bring the risk of

arecession. Our nation has had three recessions in the last generation - and each one was tied to an energy shock.

America uses about 20 million barrels of oil a day, and the need only grows. No matter how advanced our economy might be, no matter how sophisticated our equipment becomes - for the foreseeable future, we will still depend on fossil fuels.

America needs a comprehensive energy policy, yet today, it has none. The secretary of energy has admitted that the Clinton-Gore administration was "caught napping" when fuel prices began to rise - and it has taken an election to wake them up.

America now imports 56 percent of our oil. Our domestic production of crude oil is at its lowest level in 50 years. And our refining capacity has not kept pace with demand.

Oil consumption is increasing; production is dropping; imports of foreign oil are rising. Yet Vice President Gore's administration has failed to act. As a result, America, more than ever, is at the mercy of foreign government sand cartels.

On the Clinton/Gore watch, the American government has lost credibility with OPEC nations, including our Gulf War allies. We fought a war in defense of some of these countries - yet we are unable to convince them to maintain an adequate and stable supply of oil.

On the Clinton/Gore watch, Saddam Hussein's Iraq has become a major supplier of oil to America. This means that one of our worst enemies is gaining more and more control over our country's economic future. The current crisis in the Middle East underscores the danger of American reliance on Saddam Hussein's oil.

Several weeks ago, just weeks before the election, Vice President Gore called for releasing oil from America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. I strongly disagreed, because the strategic reserve is meant for times of

war or a major disruption in oil supply. It is a Petroleum Reserve, not apolitical reserve.

Every barrel released today is one less barrel available to protect us against threats to our security - threats that are becoming more vivid with this week's turmoil and violence in the Middle East.

Vice President Gore called for this release and he should take responsibility for what has occurred.

First, prices for home heating oil have not declined - in fact, they are higher today than when the administration acted. Second, one third of there serve release - 10 million barrels of oil - went to companies that do not have refineries to turn the crude into heating oil, and have little or no experience in oil operations.

More than \$300 million went to three firms that are unknown in the industry. Two of the companies had only one employee each, and one company was formed less than two months ago.

The Department of Energy admits it did not conduct basic credit checks on these companies before making these valuable allotments.

Just yesterday, the largest company announced it could not arrange financing and would have to forfeit its share. We will learn later tonight if the two other firms can arrange financing for their \$200 million allotment. The Energy Department said these three were selected on the basis of "best deal, best quality, best price." If this is the best the Administration can dot is time for a new administration.

The Clinton-Gore administration has also neglected the great potential of natural gas. Our nation is rich in natural gas. Millions of homes and businesses rely on it; Michigan is its sixth largest consumer in the United States.

Natural gas is a clean-burning fuel, yet the administration has restricted exploration and delayed some of the biggest pipeline projects -

projects to provide power and heating for the Midwest and the Northeast.

Vice President Gore says he is for natural gas - he just doesn't like people to find it or move it to where it is needed.

The administration has been consistently hostile to America's existing sources of power. They overburden our coal industry with regulations and litigation. They give inadequate support to promising renewable sources like hydroelectric power.

During our debate Wednesday night, Vice President Gore said he is not in favor of energy taxes. But he has a record - and he has written a book. His votes and his book make his position clear - he is for higher energy taxes except, apparently, when it is too close to an election.

During Vice President Gore's long career in Washington, he has supported higher energy taxes and higher energy prices; more regulation and more central controls. Vice President Gore advocated higher gas taxes and in 1993 cast the tie-breaking vote in the United States Senate to raise gasoline taxes.

He also advocated higher BTU taxes - a tax increase that his own administration calculated would cost the average consumer an additional \$320 a year.

I doubt he mentions this when he comes to Michigan. In speeches, he calls autoworkers his friends. But in his book, he declares that the engines that power your cars are his enemy.

The internal combustion engine, Mr. Gore wrote, is - and I quote - "a mortal threat to the security of every nation that is more deadly than that of any military enemy we're ever again likely to confront."

To every worker in the auto industry, to the one million Midwesterners whose jobs depend on the auto industry, I say your work is literally the engine of our American economy. Unlike Al Gore, I don't consider the internal combustion engine a threat to the future of

mankind; I consider it are markable testimony to American ingenuity.

Like all of you, I am confident that you - some of the best engineers in the world - can develop cars and trucks that will meet consumer demand and keep our environment cleaner. General Motors and others in your industry are working on many exciting innovations.

I want to encourage better technology and cleaner and more efficient fuels. I support the recent EPA tier II fuel requirements for cleaner fuels with less sulfur, which should reduce smog-causing emissions from cars by 90percent over the next decade. And I support mass transportation where it makes sense.

But I don't see an America without automobiles. We're always going to be a nation that makes cars and trucks, and builds roads and bridges and highways. That's freedom and opportunity and mobility. That's America. And unlike Mr. Gore, I will not support an international treaty that punishes the auto industry and treats America unfairly. I will work for international environmental policy that is fair and reasonable. As President, I will set a comprehensive, mainstream energy policy for the United States.

We must begin where the need is greatest, and provide immediate assistance to those least able to afford heating oil. I support the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and have proposed releasing an additional \$155 million at once, to make sure that short-term supply problems don't hurt families and threaten our economy.

We should create a Home Heating Oil Reserve to prevent shortages in the future.

But our goal is not just to manage crisis, it is to avoid crisis. Our nation must build long-term energy security.

Energy security will be a priority of my foreign policy. I will rebuild American influence and credibility with the members of OPEC, and with

nations in the Persian Gulf.

It is important to be friends with people when you do not need each other so that when you do, there is a strong bond of friendship. I would remind our friends in the Persian Gulf that our relationships are not merely commercial, but strategic - it is America that protects the peace, America that safeguards their independence.

I will build strong relationships with energy-producing countries in our own hemisphere. I will invite the governments of Canada and Mexico to join in developing a North American Energy Policy - a policy rooted in the principles of free trade and the free flow of energy across our borders. I will also support energy exploration in non-OPEC nations, to help diversify the world's energy resources.

Second, I will encourage more energy exploration and production here at home, while protecting the environment. We should open a small fraction --only 8% -- of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas exploration that is environmentally friendly.

Vice President Gore opposes this, even though his own administration has opened the National Petroleum Reserve, on Alaska's coastal plain just west of Prudhoe Bay. The ecology and environmental conditions are very similar to those of the coastal plain of ANWR just to the east.

Vice President Gore's own administration has opened more than twice as much acreage in Alaska to exploration as I have proposed, for estimated supplies that are only one-fifth as large.

They opened this reserve because they know what their Department of Energy recently said in a comprehensive report - that "the oil and gas industry is today fulfilling its role as protectors of the environment - and advanced technology is playing a large part in this success." Those are the Administration's words, not mine.

We can and must develop our resources responsibly here at home - taking out energy, and leaving only footprints.

Gas pipelines are also essential to America's energy future, and we must build them without sacrificing the environment, public health or safety. Within these parameters, we will require federal agencies to streamline the regulatory process for pipeline approval, which in some cases has taken more than three years.

We must also expand our refining capacity by addressing regulatory hurdles. The oil we pump from the ground can't be put into our cars or furnaces. First it has to be refined - and today, every refinery in America is running flat-out. Unless we expand our refinery capacity, we will be relying more and more on foreign countries to provide us with gasoline and heating oil. Third, to keep pace with America's growing demands, I will promote the production of electricity.

Our country has abundant supplies of coal. If we can overcome the environmental challenges of coal-fired plants, we will be much closer to energy security. I'll commit two billion dollars over the next decade to fund research into "clean coal" technology.

Fourth, to enhance America's long-term energy security, we must continue developing renewable sources of energy.

Fifth, as we promote electricity and renewable energy, we will work to make our air cleaner. I believe that we can develop our natural resources and protect our environment. I have proposed increased funding for energy conservation. I believe in the promise of renewable energy.

As Governor of Texas, I have required some of the most significant increases in renewable energy in the country. But renewable energy represents less than 4 percent of our energy needs-so we still must rely on other sources. My plan opens the door to more energy, to fuel a

growing economy, and a new economy. We take the path of exploration, and innovation, and American independence.

My opponent takes a different path. He believes energy consumption is the problem, and it must be discouraged by taxes and regulations. That's why he has never made energy production a priority.

We are paying a steep price for almost eight years with no energy policy. Americans are concerned about the staying power of our prosperity; more immediately, they are worried about the price of gas and the cost of their heating bills in the winter to come. Before the cold of December, comes the choice of November.

On Election Day, we can put our country on a new and better course. I'd be honored to have the support of the men and women who design and build the cars and trucks that keep America moving.

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: A Nation on the Move – Transportation Policy

Commerce is the lifeblood of our economy, and the transportation infrastructure is its circulatory system. Without safe and efficient transport, the economy withers away. Maintaining that vital infrastructure has always been, in part, a federal responsibility, and Republicans have historically been the party of builders. From the era of the transcontinental railroad and the Panama Canal to President Eisenhower's establishment of the Interstate Highway System, we have championed investment in transportation assets as a cornerstone of the economy and, indeed, our national way of life.

More recently, the Republican-led Congress has enacted two historic pieces of legislation: the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-First Century and this year's Aviation Investment and Reform Act. These landmark laws represent an unprecedented federal investment in roads, bridges, transit systems, airports and air traffic control systems — without additional taxes. They simply unlock the transportation trust funds to invest the dollars motorists and the traveling public have already paid. Those funds had been subject to years of abuse under Democrat-controlled Congresses but are now statutorily dedicated to building and maintaining the transportation system for which our citizens pay. The same budgetary protections should be extended to other transportation trust funds.

Our national railroad network is a crucial component of our public transportation system. Railroads helped build our country, and our national passenger railroad network remains a precious resource that

can play a key role in transportation and economic growth. Republicans support a healthy intercity passenger rail system, and where economically viable, the development of a national high-speed passenger railroad system as an instrument of economic development, and enhanced mobility. We also support a multi-modal approach to our transportation needs.

By reducing mandates, cutting red tape, and promoting regulatory common sense, congressional Republicans have given state and local officials unprecedented flexibility to set their own transportation priorities, from highways to bike trails. That will improve communities throughout the nation, and will also strengthen travel and tourism, a vital force for job creation with a positive annual trade balance to boot. But transportation policy remains inseparable from energy policy. The trucking industry, for example, is hard hit by current gas prices and would be crippled by the administration's new "hours of service" regulation. Consumers everywhere are literally paying the price both for what the administration has done and for what it has failed to do.

Republicans are going to get transportation policy back on track, both here at home through a sound, long-term energy policy, and internationally as well, by pursuing the "Open Skies" agreements, first proposed by President George Bush, to open foreign markets for American aviation services. In short, we will keep Americans moving safely and keep our country, in the words of the song, "a thoroughfare for freedom."

George W. Bush

Republican National Convention 2000

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Party Platform: Energy Security

What happened? Eight years ago, the nation was energy confident. Our standing in the Middle East was at its zenith. The oil cartel was in retreat; gasoline was affordable, even as automotive progress reduced emissions from cars. Today, gas prices have skyrocketed, and oil imports are at all-time highs. Foreign oil now accounts for one-third of our total trade deficit. Meanwhile, domestic oil production has fallen 17 percent over the last eight years, as vast areas of the continental U.S. have been put off limits to energy leasing — though we depend on oil and natural gas for 65 percent of our energy supply. Additional oil reserves and deposits of low-sulfur coal may be out of reach because of unilateral designation of new national monuments.

By any reasonable standard, the Department of Energy has utterly failed in its mission to safeguard America's energy security. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has been no better, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been shutting off America's energy pipeline with a regulatory blitz that has only just begun. In fact, 36 oil refineries have closed in just the last eight years, while not a single new refinery has been built in this country in the last quarter-century. EPA's patchwork of regulations has driven fuel prices higher in some areas than in others and has made energy supplies no longer fungible. What meets EPA's standards in one city may not be legally sold in another. The result has been localized shortages and sharp price spikes, as suppliers scramble to get acceptable fuels to the markets where they are needed.

Environmental concerns are not at the heart of the matter. In fact, the current administration has turned its back on the two sources that produce virtually all of the nation's emission-free power: nuclear and hydro, the sources for 30 percent of the country's electricity. Because of cumbersome federal relicensing of hydro and nuclear operations, we face the prospect of increasing emissions and dirtier air. Meanwhile, nuclear plants are choking on waste because the current administration breached its contract to remove it — and then vetoed bipartisan legislation to store it at a safe, permanent repository for which the taxpayers have already paid \$7 billion. At the same time, power-producing dams are being torn down, by federal edict, in energy-short areas, and the Pacific Northwest is their next target. Breaching dams would not only raise electric rates but would deny western farmers irreplaceable water for irrigation and a cost-effective means of moving their crops to West Coast ports. We should develop and use technologies that will help entrance salmon runs while keeping the dams in place.

It's a man-made nightmare, but at last the public is waking up and demanding change. What is at stake, after all, is not just the price we pay to heat and cool our homes. What is at stake is the nation's New Economy, which relies heavily on electricity for its infrastructure and on petroleum for its trade. Affordable energy, the result of Republican policies in the 1980s, helped create the New Economy. If we do not carefully plan for our energy needs, the entire economy could be significantly weakened. The Republican Congress has moved to deregulate the electricity industry and empower consumers through a competitive market — but congressional Democrats are holding up the process, and the administration has provided no leadership. America needs a national energy strategy — and a Republican president will work with congressional Republicans to enact their National Energy Security

Act. That strategy will:

Increase domestic supplies of coal, oil, and natural gas. Our country does have ample energy resources waiting to be developed, and there is simply no substitute for an increase in their domestic production.

Improve federal oil and gas lease permit processing and management, including coalbed methane.

Provide tax incentives for production.

Promote environmentally responsible exploration and development of oil and gas reserves on federally-owned land, including the Coastal Plain of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Offer a degree of price certainty to keep small domestic stripper producers in operation.

Advance clean coal technology.

Expand the tax credit for renewable energy sources to include wind and open-loop biomass facilities, and electricity produced from steel cogeneration.

Maintain the ethanol tax credit.

Provide a tax incentive for residential use of solar power.

This agenda will reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, help consumers by lowering energy prices, and result in lower carbon emissions than would result from the current administration's policies. To protect consumers against seasonal price spikes, that legislation also authorizes a home heating oil reserve for the Northeastern States and allows expensing of costs for its storage. It will also make low-income housing more energy-efficient. All in all, it is a dramatic reversal of the nation's present course, and that's just what America needs: a balanced portfolio of energy options that is stable, secure, and affordable, with minimal impact on the environment.

Energy - Gore

Al Gore

Hollywood, Maryland

September 21, 2000

Energy Independence

And I came here to talk about a very serious challenge that we're facing in America. Today there are families right here in St. Mary's County and all across the country who are wondering how they are going to be able to pay for heat this winter. And those who heat with heating oil are especially concerned.

Well, we have to change that. Crude oil prices are at a 10-year high, and while the big oil companies have seen their profits increase by two to three times in the past year, small distributors like Sonny's are struggling to get heating oil to your homes. We have to change that.

At the same time, gasoline prices are skyrocketing. We talked -- started off the conversation earlier about heating oil and went right into gasoline prices, because for millions of working families and middle-class families, just paying for the gasoline to drive back and forth to work, or to go to the supermarket or to pick up your kids after school is becoming much more of a burden on the family's budget. And we have to change that.

Now one of the central choices that we face in this election, just 47 days from now, is whether we will have a president who is willing to stand up to the big oil interests and fight for our families. That's the kind of president that I intend to be. I'm running for president to fight for you, to stand up for your interests.

You know, we've come a long way in the last 10 -- in the last eight

years, but this election is not an award for past performance.

I'm not asking any of you to vote for me on the basis of the economy we have. I ask for your support on the basis of the better, fairer economy, and more prosperous America that we can build together. Together, let's make sure that our prosperity enriches not just the few, but all of our families. Let's put more of the power and more of the choices back in your hands.

So for all of our progress, I am not satisfied. I'm not satisfied when the oil to heat your home becomes more a luxury and not a simple, affordable necessity. I'm not satisfied when filling up your gas tank feels like a major purchase.

America's energy resources should not be so reliant on others; so subject to shortages; so vulnerable to big oil interests with disregard for the public interest. You ought to have the choice to get in your car, turn on your engine, and go where you want, all at a reasonable price to you and your family.

I'm here to tell you today, if I'm entrusted with the presidency, I will work toward the day when we are free forever of the dominance of big oil and foreign oil. We need more energy independence in our country. We need to develop our own resources, including renewable resources. Now, we all know that's a longer-term challenge, and we need a long-term solution. And I'll talk about that in a few minutes. But we cannot just wait around. Families need action now. And there are steps that we can take right now, before winter sets in, to make heating oil affordable and to bring gasoline prices down at the pump.

To begin with, the OPEC nations have an obligation to live up to their promises. They pledged to increase oil production, and they have not. It's time for OPEC to get serious about the supply and price of oil and stabilize the price at lower levels, as they promised they would. And

at a time when profits are gushing through the roof, big oil needs to stop the profiteering.

This summer, I called for a federal investigation of concentration, noncompetitiveness, and pricing practices in the oil industry, and we're still waiting for the results of that inquiry. But this isn't rocket science, even though gasoline right now seems to be priced a lot like rocket fuel.

We know what is going on here, and we have to end it. And I promise you this: If I am president, I am going to stand up to Big Oil and demand fair gasoline prices for our families and an end to unfair profiteering. We have to also press OPEC and Big Oil to act responsibly. And we also need aggressive national action right now.

In the face of rising prices for gasoline and home heating oil, I support oil releases from our National Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We ought to start with several releases of 5 million barrels each. And assuming that is successful, we should continue with these swaps in an effort to stabilize the price of oil at lower levels and help consumers.

Next, as families start to buy heating oil for the winter, we have to take a series of steps to make sure that they are not priced out of heat at home. So today I'm calling on Congress to create a permanent home heating oil reserve for the Northeast, where the use is especially high. And especially in our coldest region, we have to see to it that families are not so vulnerable to price spikes in the winter months.

We should also help families by making it easier and cheaper for oil distributors, like Burch Oil, to keep more oil on reserve. Today I'm proposing the creation of temporary tax credits for distributors to build up oil stocks which would bring prices down for families. And we have to do more to help the hardest-pressed families.

In this time of high oil prices, let's release more low-income energy assistance across the country right at the time when it's needed. And I

call on Congress to increase our nation's budget for low-income energy assistance every year so struggling families are never left helpless and cold when a crisis hits.

These short-term measures that I've described here are urgent and vital. But as I mentioned earlier, by themselves, they are not enough. We cannot keep building our lives around a fuel source that is often distant, too often uncertain, and too easily manipulated by foreign oil and Big Oil. We have available to us in this country brand new job-creating technologies that in the years ahead can free us forever from gas tank price gauging. So I'm proposing an energy security and environment trust, a commitment to a more prosperous economy powered by cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy for families.

And let me tell you why I'm proposing this huge commitment to energy independence. There is more than one kind of national debt. Pollution is a kind of national debt. Energy dependence left for our children is a kind of national debt. Both are a borrowing from future generations.

And we should no more saddle our children and grandchildren with the cost of cleaning up our pollution and paying for our short-sighted energy dependence than we should saddle them with the burden of paying our bills. So we will improve our nation's power systems and reduce pollution at the same time by giving special incentives to industry.

We will work with industry to develop cleaner cars, trucks and buses and then sell them not only here at home, but create even more jobs by selling them around the world. We will cut taxes so families can start buying those cleaner cars and products like the more efficient oil boilers and furnaces that can save you money right away on your monthly bills, and if you get a tax credit for that, you'll have a stronger incentive to do

so, and you can make up the cost through savings more rapidly. And we'll invest in light rail and mass transit, to liberate families from having to buy gasoline at any price, if they'd prefer not to.

It all comes down to this, really. The choice should be in your hands, and you should never have to depend on the good will of the big oil companies just to heat your home or drive down the highway. My cause in this election is hard-working middle class families -- the people who pay the taxes, bear the burdens, make the mortgage payments and car payments, and should not have to empty their wallets just to fill up their gas tanks. I will not go along with an agenda that is of big oil, by big oil and for big oil. We'll fight for the people. I will not go along with an agenda that gives all the power and all the choices to the big interests.

I know this about the job of the president: It is the only position in the Constitution that is intended to be filled by someone who has the responsibility to fight not just for one district or for one state, not just for one group, not just for the wealthy and powerful, but for all of the people -- the people who drove here this morning. The people who are paying the bills. The people who are working hard to make ends meet, working longer hours, doing right by their families.

And you deserve somebody who is willing to fight for you. You deserve a voice and a champion. You need help to do what is best for your families. And if you entrust me with the presidency, I -- as I've said before, I know I won't always be the most exciting politician, but I will work hard for you every day, I will stand up for you, I will fight for you, and I will never let you down.

So I ask you to join with me now, and 47 days from now, and together let's reelect Steny Hoyer to Congress from this district. He's doing a great job. Let's put him in the majority.

Al Gore

IDW Local 712

Vanport, Pennsylvania

September 22, 2000

***Releases from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve & Establish a
Permanent Home Heating Oil Reserve***

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The inventories of heating oil are low. Gasoline prices have already gone up too fast and too high. And the predictions are that home heating oil prices will go higher unless something is done.

Now yesterday I talked about a number of steps that I think should be taken, and I think it's important to emphasize that this is a matter of great urgency for the families who are being hit in the pocketbooks. I talked with a small business person just a short time ago in the other room, whose profit for the year has just been completely wiped out because of the higher prices in the advance contracts for heating oil that he's already had to pay. He's hanging on and will hope for better next year. Lots of folks are having to do that.

I've talked with those on fixed incomes who are also facing higher prescription drug prices and living off Social Security. And then they find a huge 40-cents-a-gallon increase in their heating oil, and they can't cope with it.

So I think it's important to act. I have recommended strongly that we have releases from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, several releases of 5 million barrels each, six or seven, to assure that the mechanism works well, and then continue with those swaps and replenish it later on, when this period has passed, but get the extra supply into the pipelines and into the marketplace, so there's not this tight pressure that keeps

pushing the prices up for the people and for the small business owners.

Secondly, I want to give tax credits to the oil distributors in return for beefing up their own inventories, so that they have more on hand and they're better able then to give the lower prices for advance contracts and they're better able to resist the price hikes that come with shortages.

Next, I want to establish a permanent home heating oil reserve here in the Northeast, where 60 percent of all the home heating oil is used.

That will take pressure off prices, not only in the Northeast but in the rest of the country, because you won't have the pressure to bring it in from all the rest of the country into this biggest part of the market in the same way if we have this reserve.

And then finally, I'm calling on the Congress to release, now, \$400 million for the low-income heating assistance program, and then to increase the budget for that program, because the low-income families ought to be able to plan now, and the agencies and individuals who help with low-income families ought to have the assurance today that they're going to have the resources, because if you buy early in the season, you get a lower price. And that will save taxpayers money and it will also help out on the household budgets of the low-income families and all families.

And so I'm calling for these steps to be taken: six or seven releases of 5 million barrels each over the next month or so, and then after an assessment of how that goes, to continue with swaps; the permanent home heating oil reserve in the Northeast; tax credits for the distributors to build up their inventories; and low income heating assistance.

Now, let me say that I think it's time to stand up to the apologists for Big Oil. I reject an agenda that is of Big Oil, by Big Oil and for Big Oil. I reject the agenda of those who say, "Don't even offer a plan, do nothing about it." These prices are skyrocketing. It's hurting small businesses. It's hurting those on fixed incomes. It's hurting young families. And the

prospect for even higher prices ahead is going to cause even more trouble unless we act now.

We are not helpless. We can act. We have tools at our disposal. And I'm calling upon them -- I'm calling for them to be used. And in the process, as I say, I want to reject the agenda of Big Oil and stand up to the apologists for Big Oil.

Now, let me say one other thing before I open the discussion.

These are short-term measures. We need to also have a long-term policy that helps us move toward more energy independence so that we are not hostage to the agenda of big oil and foreign oil. We need to develop our own domestic resources. That production has gone up in the current administration here at home. We need to develop new technologies so that we can burn all of our fuels more efficiently and more cleanly. We need to create millions of good new jobs in states like Pennsylvania, with workers like those here at the IBEW -- and I appreciate the hospitality here today -- create millions of new jobs by getting out in front of the market for these new boilers and new furnaces and new cars and trucks and buses, and revamped power plants, and new technologies that help us to conserve more energy, help us to burn energy -- burn resources more cleanly and use it much more efficiently, and to get the new technologies out there not only here in the United States, but to sell them to the rest of the world, and create all these new jobs in the process. That's what I think ought to be done.

Now, finally, before the discussion, I think one of the big factors involved here is whether or not we're going to have a president who is willing to fight for people, willing to stand up to big oil and foreign oil, when that's necessary; whether we're going to have a president who is willing to listen to families and small business owners, or someone else. And I'll tell you, I know one thing about the job of president; it is the only

position in our Constitution that is filled by an individual who is supposed to have the responsibility to fight not just for one district or one state or a few or one group, but for all the people, especially those who are having trouble making ends meet, those who most need somebody who is willing to stand up and fight for them.

I went to the Congress 24 years ago, and I served eight years in the House, eight years in the Senate, and eight years as vice president. And in all that time, I have never hesitated to take on the big oil or the big pharmaceutical companies or the HMOs or whoever was operating in a way that was not in the best interests of the middle-class families of this country.

I am running for president to fight for you -- to fight for the middle class families of America, to help the working men and women of America. And I don't care who you have to take on in order to make things better, you've got to be willing to stand up to him and do it.

And I promise you, if you entrust me with the presidency, as I've said before, I won't always be the most exciting politician, but I will work hard for you every day. I will fight for you every day, and I will never let you down. And this problem is one that we'll start with.

Al Gore

The Audubon Naturalist Society

Chevy Chase, Maryland

September 29, 2000

Responsible Choices on Energy & the Environment

Yesterday, I talked about the responsible choices we have to make on the economy about the need to choose the hard right over the easy wrong, so we can build a strong and growing economy for the long haul.

Today, I want to focus on the right and responsible way to make sure America has clean, secure, affordable energy, while protecting the environment for generations to come.

For me, this issue has always been fundamental. I believe that pollution should never be the price of prosperity.

I believe that we don't have to degrade our environment in order to secure our energy future. And that is one of the most important differences in this election.

The other side now proposes to misuse high oil prices as an excuse to let oil companies invade precious national treasures -- like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

If you entrust me with the Presidency, I will not let that happen. I will fight for consumers, who deserve a reliable, affordable supply of energy. And I will fight for all Americans, who deserve to have our environment protected against those who would set the oil companies loose in the most beautiful, fragile parts of our nation.

Our opponents would have us choose between a clean environment and energy security. That is a false and outdated choice. We can achieve both if we make responsible decisions.

Today, we have the greatest chance in our lifetimes to create the

America of our ideals to make sure prosperity enriches not just the few, but all our families.

We have a chance to create and sell to the world the new technologies that will give us a healthier, stronger, more prosperous planet like cleaner cars that can go 80 miles per gallon.

That's the future we can have. But we'll never get there if we're weighed down by old-fashioned energy policies, and held back by those who want to put short-term profits over the long-term interests of our economy and our families.

Last week, crude oil prices reached a ten-year high. If you drove here today, then you know what that means for the price of gasoline. If you're one of the families that's starting to stock up on home heating oil for the winter, then you're facing a double squeeze.

And the significance of a sudden, sharp increase in oil prices goes beyond even this to the strength of our entire economy. A spike in oil prices can set off inflationary pressures, lead to slower growth, and impose higher production costs on business.

Strong economic leadership demands swift and decisive action to deal with emerging threats to our prosperity even when that action is controversial.

The fact is oil company profits have more than doubled while consumers pay more at the pump and businesses pay more to stay in business.

Several months ago, I called for an investigation into oil company pricing in the Midwest. Last week, I called on the oil companies to behave more responsibly. I called on OPEC nations to honor their agreements and increase oil production as promised.

And I called for a series of national measures in the short-term because families who have to heat their homes this winter can't wait for

the long-term.

Last week, I urged Congress to create a permanent home-heating oil reserve to provide continuing help in our coldest regions.

I'm asking Congress to increase annual heating assistance for low-income families.

And I supported a series of oil "swaps" from our nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Companies that receive oil now from the reserve will return that amount and more to the reserve at a later date. The nation will have greater oil supplies now, and our national reserve will have even more oil in the years ahead.

I was criticized for this policy. But I became convinced that waiting hadn't worked and inaction was no longer an option. And any political heat that was generated is a lot less important than the heat families need this winter.

There are now signs that we are making some progress. Oil prices in the last week have fallen by six dollars a barrel. And the economic ministers of the G-7, the world's major industrial nations, have welcomed this policy for its contribution to the stability of the global economy.

So I believe these short-term measures are vital. But I believe they are a first step the beginning, not the end, of a continuing and essential effort to achieve real, long-term energy independence.

We don't have to accept a future of old engines and power plants that waste too much energy and cause too much pollution making our air less healthy, and our climate less stable.

We don't have to build our lives around a fuel source that is distant, uncertain, and too easily manipulated.

If we do things right if we make responsible choices if we invest in the job-creating, environment-protecting technology of the future then we can have cleaner air, more reliable energy, and a more prosperous

economy all at the same time.

I'll tell you: that's a future worth fighting for.

That's why, over three months ago, I proposed an Energy Security and Environment Trust -- a dramatic new commitment to clean energy and energy independence.

There is more than one kind of national debt. Pollution and energy dependence are also a borrowing from future generations.

We should no more saddle our children and grandchildren with the cost of cleaning up our pollution and paying for short-sighted energy policies than we should saddle them with the burden of paying our budget deficits.

Let's give new incentives to industry to transform dirty old power plants into modern, clean sources of energy.

Let's say to inventors and entrepreneurs in the private sector: if you invest in new technologies that clean up the environment, America will invest in you.

Let's make sure America leads in the global market for new energy technology that is expected to reach \$10 trillion in the next two decades to create good jobs and reduce our dependence on big oil and imported oil.

Let's keep working with Detroit to bring cleaner cars, trucks, and S.U.V.'s to showrooms and streets around the world. We're just a few short years away from revolutionizing the auto industry. This is a multi-hundred-billion-dollar opportunity; we have to take it, and not leave it to others.

So let's provide targeted tax cuts to help families buy those 80-mile-a-gallon cars the minute they roll into the showrooms.

And let's invest in light rail and mass transit to reduce our dependence on gasoline, and give families more choices about how to

commute between work and home.

I know these aren't always the easiest investments for a nation to make, because we don't always see the benefits right away.

But recent events powerfully remind us that we have to think now about the future. We have to be willing to make hard choices now, because that's the only path to a cleaner, stronger, more prosperous America in the years ahead.

And there is a real difference in this election on this issue a difference as clear as the one on economic policy.

Yesterday, I discussed the other side's tax plan a plan which spends \$667 billion on a tax cut for the wealthiest one percent of Americans, and would wreck our good economy in the process.

I don't believe we should mortgage our economic future for anyone's short-term gain especially not for those who already have the most.

And we need to make the same kind of responsible choices on energy and the environment.

The plan the other side has proposed would not only endanger our environment -- it wouldn't even meet our short-term energy needs.

Drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge one of our greatest national treasures is bad environmental policy, and bad energy policy.

Framed by the majestic Brooks mountain range, this area is one of the last places where our land is preserved as it once was.

The area is fragile. It would take years and years of development which would cause decades of environmental damage to reap just a few months of increased oil supply. I oppose it and I will oppose any plan that would drill for oil in the wrong places, and degrade our irreplaceable natural heritage.

We face a fundamental choice on the environment and energy policy

in this election.

My plan helps families afford gas and home heating oil for the short-term. It invests in cleaner technology for the long-term. It can give us a greater and more reliable energy supply. It protects the environment and helps reverse the tide of global warming, an effort that is essential to the fabric of life itself.

Now here's the bottom line on the other side's plan: no real action to bring oil prices down now. No real investment in new environmental technology. No real prospect of freeing ourselves from dependence on big oil and foreign oil. And a clear, unmistakable agenda that would sacrifice the environment for shortsighted and short-term energy policies, and would not even yield any additional oil for years to come.

I have been committed to a clean environment and real energy independence for all my public service since I held some of the first hearings on cleaning up toxic waste in our communities, and joined in some of the early fights to reverse global warming. And ever since, I've been there in the fight for the environment.

When it comes to clean air and clean water when it comes to protecting our wilderness and wildlife when it comes to choosing consumers over polluters –

I've never given up, I've never backed down, and I never will.

I'm running for President to fight for you; to fight for your families; to fight for your future.

After all, the Presidency isn't a popularity contest. Sometimes, you have to be willing to spend your popularity. Sometimes, you have to be willing to do what's difficult or unpopular. Sometimes, you have to think not just of the next 39 days, but of the next 39 years.

If you entrust me with the Presidency, I know I won't always be the most exciting politician.

But I will work every day for a cleaner, stronger, more prosperous world. I'll fight with all my energy for real energy independence for America. And I will never let you down.