

different. America looked different. This is a big deal, folks. It is the biggest deal of all.

Now, we have an unusual situation this year where both the Presidential candidates speak Spanish. I'm probably the last President of the United States in the 21st century who won't speak Spanish, and I may learn when I get out of office and have time to do it. But there's a difference here. I'll just give you one example.

There's a guy named Enrique Moreno who lives in El Paso, Texas. Anybody know who he is? He grew up in the barrio there, very modest childhood, worked hard, went to Harvard, graduated summa cum laude, did great in law school. Texas judges said he's one of the three best lawyers in west Texas. So I nominated him to the Court of Appeals. The two Republican Senators from Texas wouldn't even give him a hearing. They said he wasn't qualified.

What they really meant is, he won't vote the way we want him to vote. That's what they really meant. As you know, the Governor of Texas is the Republican nominee. If he had asked them to give him a hearing, they would have done it. He didn't say a word. There was no Spanish-speaking plea for Enrique Moreno, because he's not part of their America. But he is part of our America. I think we all ought to go along for the ride.

So remember, I am so grateful to you. I will never be able to thank you enough. You were always there. You'll always be proud of the fights, even the one we lost on health care. We're looking smarter every day. I had a Congressman tell me the other day, he said, "You know, Mr. President, when I voted for your health care program, they said, 'Now, if you vote for Bill Clinton's health care program, you'll have more and more people insured by the Federal Government.'" He said, "I voted for your health care program, and sure enough, more people are insured by the Federal Government. Why? Because private insurance keeps dropping them, and we have to pick them up."

But in spite of our best efforts, there's still an unconscionable number of people without health insurance. We were right to fight for that.

But what I want you to understand is we've come too far to turn back now. We've changed this country too much to reverse course. And I'm grateful to you, and you've been wonderful to me today. But the test is going to be, now that we've got this great big old country turned around and moving in the right direction, what are we going to do with it?

You go out there and tell everybody, big election, big differences; we want you to know what the differences are. You go out there and tell everybody, Al Gore is the best and most important Vice President we ever had. He'll keep the prosperity going. He understands the future, and he can lead us there, and he'll take us all along for the ride.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:13 a.m. at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gerald McEntee, president, and William Lucy, secretary-treasurer, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Edward Keller, executive director, Pennsylvania AFSCME Council 13; Henry Nicholas, president, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees Local 1199; Dave Fillman, director, Southeast Pennsylvania Public Employees District Council 88; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks on Signing the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act in Philadelphia

June 30, 2000

I would like to begin by acknowledging the presence here of Congressman Joe Hoeffel from Pennsylvania. He represents the district adjoining Philadelphia, and I thank you, Joe. And Martha Aikens, the superintendent of the Independence National Historic Park, where we are—thank you, Martha.

To all the other Park Service employees—that's one of the few Federal jobs that I haven't held that I'd like to hold. [Laughter] And I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation to Dave Barram, the Administrator of the General Services Administration that manages our Federal buildings and has also played a critical role in putting so much of the Federal Government on-line. Thank

you, Dave. He took a modest pay cut to leave Silicon Valley to work for me several years ago, and I'm very grateful.

Two hundred and thirteen years ago, about 100 feet from where we are now, in a summer as hot as this one, the Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution of the United States. In the very first article of that document, they wrote that Government shall make no laws, quote, "impairing the obligation of contracts." James Madison called the contract clause, and I quote again, "a constitutional bulwark in favor of personal security and private rights." He and his fellow framers understood that the right of individuals to enter into commercial contracts was fundamental not just for economic growth but for the preservation of liberty itself.

Just a few moments ago I had the privilege of signing into law legislation that carries the spirit of the Founders' wisdom into the information age. The Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act will open up new frontiers of economic opportunity while protecting the rights of American consumers. The new law will give fresh momentum to what is already the longest economic expansion in our history, an expansion driven largely by the phenomenal growth in information technologies, particularly the Internet.

Firms across America are moving their supply and sales channels on-line, improving customer service, and reducing costs. The resulting productivity gains are rippling throughout our economy, helping wages to rise, businesses to start, jobs to be created without causing inflation. And individuals are not just buying and selling on-line; they're gaining information that is empowering them as consumers and as citizens.

Perhaps no invention since the railroad has had such potential to expand our opportunities and broaden our horizons—I would argue, more profound potential. But that potential is now being held back by old laws that were written, ironically, to protect the sanctity of contracts. Laws that require pen and ink signatures on paper contracts for them to be enforceable.

In order to unleash the full potential of the digital economy, Vice President Gore and I unveiled, 3 years ago, our Framework for

Global Electronic Commerce. In that document, we set out the principles we believe should shape the rules governing electronic conflicts. We said that the rules should be simple and nonregulatory, that they should not favor one technology over another, and they should give individuals and organizations maximum freedom to form electronic contracts as they see fit.

I'm grateful that Congress has kept those principles in mind as it drafted the Electronic Signatures Act. Under this landmark legislation—which I want to point out, passed by overwhelming majorities of both parties in both Houses, and I compliment both the Republicans and the Democrats for their support of this—on-line contracts will now have the same legal force as equivalent paper contracts. Companies will have the legal certainty they need to invest and expand in electronic commerce. They will be able not only to purchase products and services but to contract to do so. And they could potentially save billions of dollars by sending and retaining monthly statements and other records in electronic form.

Eventually, vast warehouses of paper will be replaced by servers about the size of VCR's. Customers will soon enjoy a whole new universe of on-line services. With the swipe of a smart card and the click of a mouse, they will be able to finalize mortgages, sign insurance contracts, or open brokerage accounts.

Just as importantly, the law affords consumers who contract on-line the very same kind of protections and records, such as financial disclosures, they currently receive when they sign paper contracts. Consumers will be able to choose whether to do business and receive records on paper or on-line. They will have the power to decide if they want to receive notice and disclosures electronically. It will be the company's responsibility to ensure that the data it sends to a consumer can be read on that consumer's computer—no more E-mail attachments with gibberish inside.

Finally, Government agencies will have the authority to enforce the laws, protect the public interest, and carry out their missions in the electronic world.

For 8 years now, I have worked to set forth a new vision of Government and politics that marries our most enduring values to the demands of the new information age. In many ways, the Electronic Signatures Act exemplifies that vision. It shows what we in Washington can accomplish when we put progress above partisanship, when we reach across party lines to work for the American people and our common future.

I want to congratulate the many organizations and again, the lawmakers in both parties, and the members of our administration who worked so hard to get this bill passed, and offer a special thanks to Vice President Gore who long ago had the vision to understand the potential of this technology, and who has led our administration's efforts to harness that potential to benefit all Americans.

Now, let's see if this works.

[At this point, the President electronically signed the bill.]

Now, we have to wait a while while the act comes up and the magic has worked. It's amazing to think that Americans will soon be using cards like this one for everything from hiring a lawyer to closing a mortgage. Just imagine if this had existed 224 years ago, the Founding Fathers wouldn't have had to come all the way to Philadelphia on July 4th for the Declaration of Independence. They could have E-mailed their "John Hancocks" in.

[The President verified the electronic signature.]

Well, it works, and it will work for you. And all of you young people will someday look back on this day that you were here and marvel that we thought it was any big deal. *[Laughter]* And that will be the ultimate test of success. I wish you well, I hope we've done a good job of preparing your future.

Happy Fourth of July weekend. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. at Congress Hall in the Independence National Historical Park. S. 761, approved June 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-229.

Statement on the Nomination of Roger Gregory to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

June 30, 2000

Today I am very pleased to announce the nomination of Roger Gregory to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Roger Gregory is a highly qualified candidate who will, if confirmed, serve the fourth circuit and our Nation with distinction.

His life story is also a testament to the power and promise of the American dream. Roger Gregory is from Richmond, Virginia, and is the first in his family to finish high school. He went on to college and law school, returning as a young adjunct professor to a school where his mother had worked as a maid. Today Roger Gregory is a highly respected Richmond litigator. He has tried hundreds of cases in the Virginia courts.

I am honored to nominate Roger Gregory because he is highly qualified and a strong candidate. But I am also proud to nominate a man who, if confirmed, will be the first African-American ever to serve on the fourth circuit. The fourth circuit has the largest African-American population of any circuit in this country, yet it has never had an African-American appellate judge. It is long past time to right that wrong. Justice may be blind, but we all know that diversity in the courts, as in all aspects of society, sharpens our vision and makes us a stronger nation. Roger Gregory's confirmation would be an historic step for the people of Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and for American justice.

The fourth circuit needs Roger Gregory. Its caseload has increased by over 15 percent in just 5 years yet more than a quarter of its bench stands empty. The seat for which I have nominated Roger Gregory has been declared a judicial emergency by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. It has been vacant almost a decade, longer than any seat in the Nation. That is an embarrassment for any American who cares about our justice system. We cannot be tough on crime if our courts cannot conduct judicial