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the foremost repositories of American heritage and culture, the Institution provides unique insight into our history and the development of our vibrant national character.

As we celebrate the sesquicentennial of the Smithsonian Institution, let us recognize the work done by its many museums, research facilities, and educational endeavors and rededicate ourselves to the "increase and diffusion of knowledge" James Smithson sought to advance. In doing so, we can more fully explore the wonders of our world and continue to bring people together for the common pursuit of knowledge.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, and in honor of the memory of James Smithson and to commemorate the accomplishments of the Smithsonian Institution, do hereby proclaim August 10, 1996, as the 150th Anniversary of the Smithsonian Institution and urge the people of the United States to observe this anniversary with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:01 a.m., February 8, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 9.

Remarks on Signing the Telecommunications Act of 1996

February 8, 1996

Thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress, and ladies and gentlemen: I'd like to begin by thanking the Library of Congress for hosting us here. It's my understanding this may be the only time in American history a piece of legislation has been signed here, and perhaps the first time in three decades when one has been signed on Capitol Hill. If that is so, then this is certainly a worthy occasion.

I thank Lily Tomlin for reminding us that the Internet can be fun—[*laughter*]—and the students at Calvin Coolidge for reminding us that the Internet can do a world of good.

I thank the Vice President, who fought for this bill for so long on behalf of the American people. And I thank the Members of Congress in both parties, starting with the leadership, who believed in the promise and the possibility of telecommunications reform. I thank the vast array of interest groups who had sometimes conflicting concerns about this bill who were able to work together and work through them so that we could move this together.

This law is truly revolutionary legislation that will bring the future to our doorstep. In the State of the Union, just a few days ago, I asked the Congress to pass this law, and they did with remarkable speed and dispatch. Even the years that were spent working on it were a relatively short time given the tradition of congressional decisionmaking over major matters.

This historic legislation in my way of thinking really embodies what we ought to be about as a country and what we ought to be about in this city. It clearly enables the age of possibility in America to expand to include more Americans. It will create many, many high-wage jobs. It will provide for more information and more entertainment to virtually every American home. It embodies our best values by supporting the kind of market reforms that the Vice President mentioned, as well as the V-chip. And it brings us together, and it was passed by people coming together.

This bill is an indication of what can be done when Republicans and Democrats work together in a spirit of genuine cooperation to advance the public interest and bring us to a brighter future.

It is fitting that we mark this moment here in the Library of Congress. It is Thomas Jefferson's building. Most of you know President Jefferson deeded his books to our young Nation after our first library was burned to the ground in the War of 1812. The volumes that line these walls grew out of Jefferson's

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legacy. He understood that democracy depends upon the free flow of information. He said, "He who receives an idea from me receives instruction himself without lessening mine. And he who lights his paper at mine receives light without darkening me."

Today, the information revolution is spreading light, the light Jefferson spoke about, all across our land and all across the world. It will allow every American child to bring the ideas stored in this reading room into his or her own living room or school room.

Americans have always had a genius for communications. The power of our Founding Fathers' words reverberated across the world from the moment they were said down to the present day. From the Pony Express to the miracle of a human voice over the phone line, American innovation and communications have broken the barriers of time and space to make it easier for us to stay in touch, to learn from each other, to reach for our highest aspirations.

Today our world is being remade yet again by an information revolution, changing the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to each other. Already the revolution is so profound that it is changing the dominant economic model of the age. And already, thanks to the scientific and entrepreneurial genius of American workers in this country, it has created vast, vast opportunities for us to grow and learn and enrich ourselves in body and in spirit.

But this revolution has been held back by outdated laws designed for a time when there was one phone company, three TV networks, no such thing as a personal computer. Today, with the stroke of a pen, our laws will catch up with our future. We will help to create an open marketplace where competition and innovation can move as quick as light. An industry that is already one-sixth of our entire economy will thrive. It will create opportunity, many more high-wage jobs, and better lives for all Americans. Soon, working parents will be able to check up on their children in class via computer. Families heading off on vacation trips will be able to program the fastest route in their car computers, thanks to the work the Department of Transportation is now doing. On a rainy Saturday night, you'll be able to order up every movie ever produced or every symphony ever created in a minute's time. For those of us who like to watch too many movies and listen to too much music in a single sitting, that may be a mixed blessing.

This law also recognizes that with freedom comes responsibility. Any truly competitive market requires rules. This bill protects consumers against monopolies. It guarantees the diversity of voices our democracy depends upon. Perhaps most of all, it enhances the common good. Under this law, our schools, our libraries, our hospitals will receive telecommunication services at reduced cost. This simple act will move us one giant step closer to realizing a challenge I put forward in the State of the Union to connect all our classrooms and libraries to the information superhighway by the year 2000, not through a big Government program, but through a creative ever-unfolding partnership led by scientists and entrepreneurs, supported by business and government and communities working together.

We know the information age will bring blessings for our people and our country. But like most human blessings, we know the blessings will be mixed. We also know that the programming beamed into our homes can undercut our values and make it more difficult for parents to raise their children.

Children sometimes are exposed to images parents don't want them to see because they shouldn't. A comprehensive study released just yesterday confirms what every parent knows; televised violence is pervasive and numbing, and if exposed constantly to it, young people can develop a numbing, lasting, corrosive reaction to it. Televised violence in too much volume and intensity over too long a period of time may teach our children that such violence has no consequences and is an unavoidable part of modern life. Neither is true.

In my State of the Union Address, when I asked Congress to pass the telecommunications law, I mentioned in particular the V-chip designed to strengthen families and their ability to protect their children from television violence and other inappropriate programs as they determine. I am very proud that this new legislation includes the V-chip.

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It's not such a big requirement, as you can see—here is one—but it can make a big difference in the lives of families all over America.

I thank the Congress and the Members of both parties for giving parents who want to take more responsibility for their children's upbringing an important tool to do so. I thank the Congress for reducing the chances that the hours spent in church or synagogue or in discussion around the dinner table about right and wrong and what can and cannot happen in the world will not be undone by unthinking hours in front of a television set.

Of course, parents now have to do their end of the job and decide what they do or don't want their young children to see. But if every parent uses this chip wisely, it can become a powerful voice against teen violence, teen pregnancy, teen drug use, and for both learning and entertainment. The responsibility of parents to do this is something they deserve and something they plainly need. Now that they have it, they must use it.

I want to acknowledge in this audience the activists, the parents who pushed for the V-chip and thank you very much for making it possible.

To make the V-chip as effective as it can be, I have challenged the broadcast industries to do what the movies have done, to rate programming in a way that will help the parents to make these decisions. I invited the entertainment industry leaders to come to the White House to work with me to improve what our children see on television, and I'm pleased to announce that exactly 3 weeks from today, on February the 29th, we will convene our meeting and get to work. I thank the leaders of the entertainment industry for coming, and I will look forward to working with them.

In 1957, President Eisenhower signed another important bill into law, another bill that was like this. It seized the opportunities of the moment. It made them more broadly available to all Americans. It met the challenge of change. It reinforced our fundamental values and aspirations. And it was done in a harmonious, bipartisan spirit. The Interstate Highway Act literally brought Americans closer together. We were connected city to city, town to town, family to family, as we had never been before. That law did more to bring Americans together than any other law this century, and that same spirit of connection and communication is the driving force behind the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

When President Eisenhower signed the highway bill, he gave one of his pens to the father of that legislation, Senator Albert Gore, Sr., of Tennessee. His son, the Vice President, in many ways is the father of this legislation because he's worked on it for more than 20 years, since he first began to promote what he called, in the phrase he coined, "the information superhighway."

You heard him say today that he always dreamed that a child from his little home town of Carthage could come home from school and be able to connect to the Library of Congress. I'm proud that the Vice President is able to be here today and to play the role he deserves to play in this. And I thank all the others who have done this. But 2 days ago, I asked him if he would give me the pen that his father got from President Eisenhower to begin the signing of this legislation. And so, that is the very nice pen you see.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what we can do about this in a bipartisan manner, but I'm afraid that people would say that in the fifties, that's the time when people in Washington were real leaders and pens were real pens. [*Laughter*]

At any rate, I'm going to begin, in honor of Senator Gore, Sr., and Vice President Gore, the signing with that pen that President Eisenhower used to sign the Interstate Highway Act, and then go on with the signing.

And again, let me say to all of you, I wish every person here who has played a role in this could have one of these pens. I am very, very grateful to you. And then after I sign the actual bill, we're going to sign a copy of the bill over here and send it into cyberspace. I believe that this is the first bill that ever made that journey, and that will make me whatever it was Ernestine said, a cybernaut, or whatever she said. [*Laughter*]

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Again, let me thank you from the bottom of my heart, every one of you, for making this great day for America possible.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. in the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. In his remarks, he referred to comedian Lily Tomlin, who portrayed her character Ernestine the telephone operator in a dialog with the Vice President. S. 652, approved February 8, was assigned Public Law No. 104–104.

Statement on Signing the Telecommunications Act of 1996

February 8, 1996

Today I have signed into law S. 652, the "Telecommunications Act of 1996." This landmark legislation fulfills my Administration's promise to reform our telecommunications laws in a manner that leads to competition and private investment, promotes universal service and open access to information networks, and provides for flexible government regulation. The Act opens up competition between local telephone companies, long distance providers and cable companies; expands the reach of advanced telecommunications services to schools, libraries, and hospitals; and requires the use of new V-chip technology to enable families to exercise greater control over the television programming that comes into their homes.

For nearly two decades, Vice President Gore has worked to spur the creation of a national information superhighway. This Act lays the foundation for the robust investment and development that will create such a superhighway to serve both the private sector and the public interest.

Over the past 3 years, my Administration has worked vigorously to produce legislation that would provide consumers greater choices and better quality in their telephone, cable, and information services. This legislation puts us squarely on the road to a brighter, more productive future.

In the world of the mass media, this Act seeks to remove unnecessary regulation and open the way for freer markets. I support that philosophy. At the same time, however, my Administration has opposed measures that would allow undue concentration in the mass media. I am very pleased that this Act retains reasonable limits on the ability of one company or individual to own television, radio, and newspaper properties in local markets and retains national ownership limits on television stations. My Administration will continue its efforts to ensure that the American public has access to many different sources of news and information in their communities.

The Act increases from 25 to 35 percent the cap on the amount of the national audience that television stations owned by one person or entity can reach. This cap will prevent a single broadcast group owner from dominating the national media market.

While the Act removes the statutory ban on ownership of a cable system and a broadcast station in the same local market, it does not eliminate the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) regulatory ban on such cross-ownership. This ownership restriction continues to be very important in maintaining competition in local markets and should be maintained by the FCC. In addition, while certain regulatory cross-ownership bans are no longer necessary and have been eliminated, others that are critical to maintaining the diversity of local news and information sources have been retained. For example, the Act maintains the regulatory ban on common ownership of a newspaper and a broadcast television or radio station.

With regard to the ban on ownership of more than one television station in a local market, the Act directs the FCC to conduct a rulemaking to review its regulation and its waiver policy. Currently, the FCC allows ownership of more than one television station only in narrow and compelling circumstances, such as when a station would otherwise go dark, and where local diversity would not be reduced. Any changes in this policy should allow ownership of two stations only when doing so would clearly not reduce the diversity of independent outlets of news and information in a community. My Administration will continue to support a fair balance between economic viability and diversity.

Rates for cable programming services and equipment used solely to receive such serv-

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