

ERIC K. FEDERING

TO: JOHN PODESTA
THE WHITE HOUSE

URGENT

John

These are Norm's prepared
remarks for this morning.

Please call me on my mobile
(202.494.1091) with any questions.

Eric Federing

2 pages follow

1/2
Thank you, Mr. President.

I am honored to be your nominee for Secretary of Commerce. I am honored to be a member of the Clinton/Gore Administration and its commitment to the development of new economic markets here and abroad. And, I am honored—and humbled—to be walking across an historic threshold with you.

Our nation is now in the longest period of sustained economic expansion ever seen in its history. This expansion is an achievement, not an accident. It was achieved by raising the productivity and competitiveness of our businesses and our workforce. It was achieved in large measure through the policies and the determination of the President and this Administration.

There can be no more important task before us than to further advance the policies that have brought us to this triumph of economic performance and prosperity.

And you have another triumph here today, Mr. President. My parents came to the United States from Japan more than 90 years ago in search of the American Dream. I am proud to be chosen by President Clinton to be the first Asian Pacific American to serve in any President's cabinet. The substance

of your actions today must never be underestimated or forgotten.

Mr. President, you have the eternal gratitude of not just Japanese Americans or Asian Americans—but, I believe, every American.

I know the New Economy well, Mr. President. Since the Second World War, my home state of California has often led the way in national trends of growth and prosperity. This was true throughout my 30 years representing Silicon Valley—as Mayor of San Jose and then in Congress. It is true today, as the Clinton-Gore Administration has led the New Economy to sweep the Nation.

Some might say that the months remaining in this Administration is not a lot of time to make a difference in the life of this Nation. But I disagree. Six months is a virtual eternity in the New Economy.

I mean to help you keep all sectors of the economy strong and growing. We owe that to the American people.

Thanks a million, Mr. President.

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PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOMINATION OF NORM MINETA

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, DC

June 29, 2000

Good morning. Today I am very pleased to nominate Norm Mineta to be our 33rd Secretary of Commerce, to carry on the successful work of Bill Daley, Mickey Kantor, and Ron Brown. I want to welcome Norm and his wife Dani, and thank Bill Daley for returning from his new duties to be with us today. I also want to thank the Deputy Secretary of Commerce, Robert Mallett, for being here today and for being part of that same tradition of excellence – ~~in~~^{for} his leadership in improving the way the Department is run and especially his efforts to open government contracting to women and minority-owned businesses. Bob, we couldn't do it without you.

Norm Mineta is a worthy addition to my Cabinet. He was, of course, a member of Congress for 21 years, representing Silicon Valley and serving as Chair of the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation. He was a Congressional leader on trade and technology, and in helping his colleagues understand and promote the emerging digital economy. We worked closely together not just on trade issues, but on broader national issues such as the Family and Medical Leave Act, where his support was pivotal. And he has ably chaired my Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Now, Norm thought he had left politics for good in 1995, when he left Congress to work for Lockheed Martin. But politics – and public service – have a way of calling the best people back. And Norm is one of the best. He will be a strong leader for the Department of Commerce, and a highly skilled negotiator here in Washington and around the world. And he will play a crucial role in keeping our economic strategy focused and on target: opening trade around the world, investing in our people, promoting high technology and bridging the digital divide.

Norm brings with him an in-depth understanding of American business, and a strong sense of the needs of our high-tech economy. But he also brings with him a deep concern for people – especially those who have been disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

You see, Norm Mineta's family story tells a lot about the promise of the American dream, and the power of an individual's devotion to opportunity and justice. As a young boy during World War II, Norm and his family were forced from their home and held hundreds of miles away in a desolate internment camp for Japanese-Americans.

When he got home, young Norm vowed to work hard to make sure that kind of injustice could never happen to anyone else. He grew up and went to college, served with the Army in Korea and Japan. And then he began a career of public service in the San Jose city government, becoming the first Asian-Pacific American mayor of a major American city. He was elected to Congress in 1974 and became the first Asian-Pacific American to chair a major Congressional committee. But he never stopped fighting for justice. His efforts led to the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided an apology and compensation for every survivor of the wartime camps.

I am proud to add to Norm's string of firsts by naming him the first Asian-Pacific American to hold a Cabinet post. And I am proud to have a man of his qualities as a member of our economic team, as we work to seize this moment of unprecedented opportunity and extend our prosperity and meet the challenges of a rapidly globalizing economy.

Recently, I received a remarkable book called *Asian American Dreams*. Its author writes that Asian-Pacific Americans – and I would say all Americans – are “a people in constant motion, a great work in progress, each stage more faceted and complex than before.

As we overcome adversity and take on new challenges...
our special dynamism is our gift to America.”

Today we have entered a new era, one that is more complex than ever before. As we benefit from the newest technological breakthroughs, we must remain rooted in our oldest and most cherished values. We must keep laboring to build an economy in which every American can take part. And Norm Mineta’s drive and dynamism will be vital to that effort.

Thank you. Now I would like to ask Norm to say a few words.

[return to podium]

Before we conclude, I would like to comment on last night's vote in the House on prescription drug coverage.

The American people should know that rather than making real progress, the Republican prescription drug bill made an empty promise to America's seniors. That bill passed, along partisan lines, and offers a flawed, unworkable private insurance prescription benefit that insurance companies themselves say won't work. It provides more political cover for Republicans than insurance coverage for our nation's seniors.

Our concerns have just been confirmed by new analysis from Congress's own budget office. In a report made available just yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office concludes that more than half of Medicare beneficiaries without drug coverage today would not be covered by the Republican private insurance plan. It also shows that premiums would be 50 percent higher than those under my plan. This is for a benefit that is at least 20 percent less valuable.

America's seniors and people with disabilities understand the difference between a real prescription drug plan and a flawed imitation.

That is why our plan is supported by leading aging and disability groups across the country. The only groups endorsing the Republican plan are drug manufacturers and their allies. We need legislation that puts the public interest above the special interests. Any prescription drug plan that is passed must benefit the people who take prescription drugs more than those who make them.

So, I ask the Congress to work across party lines and send me a bipartisan bill that ensures an affordable, available and dependable Medicare prescription drug option for all seniors.

for Lockheed Martin. But politics – and public service – have a way of calling the best people back. And Norm is one of the best. He will be a highly skilled negotiator in the back rooms of Washington and in conference rooms around the world. He brings with him an in-depth understanding of American business, and a strong sense of the needs of our high-tech economy. But he also brings with him a deep concern for people – especially those who have been disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

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Today we face ~~a new era in our history~~, one that is more complex than ever before. We *face* ~~must come to terms with the newest technological breakthroughs and the oldest unsolved problems of our common humanity~~ *justice*. We must keep laboring to build an economy in which every American can take part. And Norm Mineta's drive and dynamism will be an ~~important asset on our way~~ *valuable to that effort*

Thank you. Now I would like to ask Norm to say a few words.