

WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON



SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

JANURARY 20, 1997

My fellow citizens:

At this last presidential inauguration of the 20th century, let us lift our eyes toward the challenges that await us in the next century. It is our great good fortune that time and chance have put us not only at the edge of a new century, in a new millennium, but on the edge of a bright new prospect in human affairs -- a moment that will define our course, and our character, for decades to come. We must keep our old democracy forever young. Guided by the ancient vision of a promised land, let us set our sights upon a land of new promise.

The promise of America was born in the 18th century out of the bold conviction that we are all created equal. It was extended and preserved in the 19th century, when our nation spread across the continent, saved the union, and abolished the awful scourge of slavery.

Then, in turmoil and triumph, that promise exploded onto the world stage to make this the American Century.

And what a century it has been. America became the world's mightiest industrial power; saved the world from tyranny in two world wars and a long cold war; and time and again, reached out across the globe to millions who, like us, longed for the blessings of liberty.

Along the way, Americans produced a great middle class and security in old age; built unrivaled centers of learning and opened public schools to all; split the atom and explored the heavens; invented the computer and the microchip; and deepened the wellspring of justice by making a revolution in civil rights for African Americans and all minorities, and extending the circle of citizenship, opportunity and dignity to women.

Now, for the third time, a new century is upon us, and another time to choose. We began the 19th century with a choice, to spread our nation from coast to coast. We began the 20th century with a choice, to harness the Industrial Revolution to our values of free enterprise, conservation, and human decency. Those choices made all the difference. At the dawn of the 21st century a free people must now choose to shape the forces of the Information Age and the global society, to unleash the limitless potential of all our people, and, yes, to form a more perfect union.

When last we gathered, our march to this new future seemed less certain than it does today. We vowed then to set a clear course to renew our nation.

In these four years, we have been touched by tragedy, exhilarated by challenge, strengthened by achievement. America stands alone as the world's indispensable nation. Once again, our economy is the strongest on Earth. Once again, we are building stronger families, thriving communities, better educational opportunities, a cleaner environment. Problems that once seemed destined to deepen now bend to our efforts: our streets are safer and record numbers of our fellow citizens have moved from welfare to work.

And once again, we have resolved for our time a great debate over the role of government. Today we can declare: Government is not the problem, and government is not the solution. We -- the American people -- we are the solution. (Applause.) Our founders understood that well and gave us a democracy strong enough to endure for centuries, flexible enough to face our common challenges and advance our common dreams in each new day.

As times change, so government must change. We need a new government for a new century -- humble enough not to try to solve all our problems for us, but strong enough to give us the tools to solve our problems for ourselves; a government that is smaller, lives within its means, and does more with less. Yet where it can stand up for our values and interests in the world, and where it can give Americans the power to make a real difference in their everyday lives, government should do more, not less. The preeminent mission of our new government is to give all Americans an opportunity -- not a guarantee, but a real opportunity -- to build better lives. (Applause.)

Beyond that, my fellow citizens, the future is up to us. Our founders taught us that the preservation of our liberty and our union depends upon responsible citizenship. And we need a new sense of responsibility for a new century. There is work to do, work that government alone cannot do: teaching children to read; hiring people off welfare rolls; coming out from behind locked doors and shuttered windows to help reclaim our streets from drugs and gangs and crime; taking time out of our own lives to serve others.

Each and every one of us, in our own way, must assume personal responsibility -- not only for ourselves and our families, but for our neighbors and our nation. (Applause.) Our greatest responsibility is to embrace a new spirit of community for a new century. For any one of us to succeed, we must succeed as one America.

The challenge of our past remains the challenge of our future -- will we be one nation, one people, with one common destiny, or not? Will we all come together, or come apart?

The divide of race has been America's constant curse. And each new wave of immigrants gives new targets to old prejudices. Prejudice and contempt, cloaked in the pretense of religious or political conviction are no different. (Applause.) These forces have nearly destroyed our nation in the past. They plague us still. They fuel the fanaticism of terror. And they torment the lives of millions in fractured nations all around the world.

These obsessions cripple both those who hate and, of course, those who are hated, robbing both of what they might become. We cannot, we will not, succumb to the dark impulses that lurk in the far regions of the soul everywhere. We shall overcome them. (Applause.) And we shall replace them with the generous spirit of a people who feel at

home with one another.

Our rich texture of racial, religious and political diversity will be a Godsend in the 21st century. Great rewards will come to those who can live together, learn together, work together, forge new ties that bind together.

As this new era approaches we can already see its broad outlines. Ten years ago, the Internet was the mystical province of physicists; today, it is a commonplace encyclopedia for millions of schoolchildren. Scientists now are decoding the blueprint of human life. Cures for our most feared illnesses seem close at hand.

The world is no longer divided into two hostile camps. Instead, now we are building bonds with nations that once were our adversaries. Growing connections of commerce and culture give us a chance to lift the fortunes and spirits of people the world over. And for the very first time in all of history, more people on this planet live under democracy than dictatorship. (Applause.)

My fellow Americans, as we look back at this remarkable century, we may ask, can we hope not just to follow, but even to surpass the achievements of the 20th century in America and to avoid the awful bloodshed that stained its legacy? To that question, every American here and every American in our land today must answer a resounding "Yes." (Applause.)

This is the heart of our task. With a new vision of government, a new sense of responsibility, a new spirit of community, we will sustain America's journey. The promise we sought in a new land we will find again in a land of new promise. (Applause.)

In this new land, education will be every citizen's most prized possession. Our schools will have the highest standards in the world, igniting the spark of possibility in the eyes of every girl and every boy. And the doors of higher education will be open to all. The knowledge and power of the Information Age will be within reach not just of the few, but of every classroom, every library, every child. Parents and children will have time not only to work, but to read and play together. And the plans they make at their kitchen table will be those of a better home, a better job, the certain chance to go to college.

Our streets will echo again with the laughter of our children, because no one will try to shoot them or sell them drugs anymore. Everyone who can work, will work, with today's permanent under class part of tomorrow's growing middle class. New miracles of medicine at last will reach not only those who can claim care now, but the children and hardworking families too long denied.

We will stand mighty for peace and freedom, and maintain a strong defense against terror and destruction. Our children will sleep free from the threat of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Ports and airports, farms and factories will thrive with trade and innovation and ideas. And the world's greatest democracy will lead a whole world of democracies.

Our land of new promise will be a nation that meets its obligations -- a nation that balances its budget, but never loses the balance of its values. (Applause.) A nation where

our grandparents have secure retirement and health care, and their grandchildren know we have made the reforms necessary to sustain those benefits for their time. (Applause.) A nation that fortifies the world's most productive economy even as it protects the great natural bounty of our water, air, and majestic land.

And in this land of new promise, we will have reformed our politics so that the voice of the people will always speak louder than the din of narrow interests -- regaining the participation and deserving the trust of all Americans. (Applause.)

Fellow citizens, let us build that America, a nation ever moving forward toward realizing the full potential of all its citizens. Prosperity and power -- yes, they are important, and we must maintain them. But let us never forget: The greatest progress we have made, and the greatest progress we have yet to make, is in the human heart. In the end, all the world's wealth and a thousand armies are no match for the strength and decency of the human spirit. (Applause.)

Thirty-four years ago, the man whose life we celebrate today spoke to us down there, at the other end of this Mall, in words that moved the conscience of a nation. Like a prophet of old, he told of his dream that one day America would rise up and treat all its citizens as equals before the law and in the heart. Martin Luther King's dream was the American Dream. His quest is our quest: the ceaseless striving to live out our true creed. Our history has been built on such dreams and labors. And by our dreams and labors we will redeem the promise of America in the 21st century.

To that effort I pledge all my strength and every power of my office. I ask the members of Congress here to join in that pledge. The American people returned to office a President of one party and a Congress of another. Surely, they did not do this to advance the politics of petty bickering and extreme partisanship they plainly deplore. (Applause.) No, they call on us instead to be repairers of the breach, and to move on with America's mission.

America demands and deserves big things from us -- and nothing big ever came from being small. (Applause.) Let us remember the timeless wisdom of Cardinal Bernardin, when facing the end of his own life. He said: "It is wrong to waste the precious gift of time, on acrimony and division."

Fellow citizens, we must not waste the precious gift of this time. For all of us are on that same journey of our lives, and our journey, too, will come to an end. But the journey of our America must go on.

And so, my fellow Americans, we must be strong, for there is much to dare. The demands of our time are great and they are different. Let us meet them with faith and courage, with patience and a grateful and happy heart. Let us shape the hope of this day into the noblest chapter in our history. Yes, let us build our bridge. (Applause.) A bridge wide enough and strong enough for every American to cross over to a blessed land of new promise.

May those generations whose faces we cannot yet see, whose names we may never know, say of us here that we led our beloved land into a new century with the American Dream alive for all her children; with the American promise of a more perfect union a reality for all her people; with America's bright flame of freedom spreading throughout all the

world.

From the height of this place and the summit of this century, let us go forth. May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead -- and always, always bless our America. (Applause.)

State of the Union Address

[Date]:

[Policy Proposals]:

• Four pledges to 21st Century America:

- (1) Every child will begin school ready to learn & graduate ready to succeed
- (2) Every family will succeed at home & work and no child will be raised in poverty
- (3) We will meet the challenges of aging America
- (4) We will assure quality, affordable health care, at last, for all Americans.

• Stalled legislation that ought to be passed:

- Patients' bill of rights
- Campaign Finance reform (McClain Feingold)
- Judicial nominations
- Raise minimum wage

• Education - Higher standards, greater accountability, and extra help for kids to meet higher expectations

↳ hold districts accountable & reward success

- Double investment in ~~initiatives~~ programs to turn around low-performing schools; after-school / summer school programs
- Another \$1 billion for Head Start
- New teacher quality initiative (details?)
- Classroom construction initiative
- Gear-Up program (mentors for kids from disadvantaged backgrounds)
- College Opportunity Tax Cut (tax deduction for \$10,000 of tuition costs).

• Family - strengthening programs / Health Care

- Make low-income parents eligible for insurance through CHIP (program that covers their children).

- Let people between 55 & 65 buy into Medicare & give them a tax credit for the \$ they spend
- FY 2001 Budget provides funds for seniors to choose prescription drug coverage through Medicare
- Triple long-term care tax credit to \$3,000
- Expand access to mental health care
- Strengthen fatherhood initiatives.

• Crime / Gun control

- Mandatory background checks at gun shows
- Child safety locks
- Ban on large ammunition clips
- Enforce existing gun laws better
- License handgun buyers
- Smart gun technology
- Single, voluntary ratings ~~to~~ to prevent violence on TV

• Digital Divide

- Close by connecting all classrooms to internet & creating computer clusters in public housing

• Livable communities

- More funding for advanced transit systems
- Save open spaces in areas of heavy development
- Help major cities around the Great Lakes protect their waterways & enhance the quality of life.

• Service Initiatives

- Help Faith-based organizations fight poverty & drug abuse
- Second Chance Homes for teen mothers
- Tax deduction for all gifts to charity regardless of income level

2000 State of the Union Address: Transcript

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 27, 2000

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS****U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C.**

9:18 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, members of Congress, honored guests, my fellow Americans:

We are fortunate to be alive at this moment in history. (Applause.) Never before has our nation enjoyed, at once, so much prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis and so few external threats. Never before have we had such a blessed opportunity -- and, therefore, such a profound obligation -- to build the more perfect union of our founders' dreams.

We begin the new century with over 20 million new jobs; the fastest economic growth in more than 30 years; the lowest unemployment rates in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest African American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record; the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. And next month, America will achieve the longest period of economic growth in our entire history. (Applause.)

We have built a new economy.

And our economic revolution has been matched by a revival of the American spirit: crime down by 20 percent, to its lowest level in 25 years; teen births down seven years in a row; adoptions up by 30 percent; welfare rolls cut in half to their lowest levels in 30 years.

My fellow Americans, the state of our union is the strongest it has ever been. (Applause.)

As always, the real credit belongs to the American people. (Applause.) My gratitude also goes to those of you in this chamber who have worked with us to put progress over partisanship.

Eight years ago, it was not so clear to most Americans there would be much to celebrate in the year 2000. Then our nation was gripped by economic distress, social decline, political gridlock. The title of a best-selling book asked: "America: What Went Wrong?"

In the best traditions of our nation, Americans determined to set things right. We restored the vital center, replacing outmoded ideologies with a new vision anchored in basic, enduring values: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. We reinvented government, transforming it into a catalyst for new ideas that stress both opportunity and responsibility, and give our people the tools they need to solve their own problems.

With the smallest federal work force in 40 years, we turned record deficits into record surpluses, and doubled our investment in education. We cut crime, with 100,000

community police and the Brady law, which has kept guns out of the hands of half a million criminals. (Applause.)

We ended welfare as we knew it -- (applause) -- requiring work while protecting health care and nutrition for children, and investing more in child care, transportation, and housing to help their parents go to work. We've helped parents to succeed at home and at work, with family leave, which 20 millions Americans have now used to care for a newborn child or a sick loved one. We've engaged 150,000 young Americans in citizen service through AmeriCorps, while helping them earn money for college.

In 1992, we just had a road map; today, we have results. (Applause.)

But even more important, America again has the confidence to dream big dreams. But we must not let this confidence drift into complacency. For we, all of us, will be judged by the dreams and deeds we pass on to our children. And on that score, we will be held to a high standard, indeed, because our chance to do good is so great.

My fellow Americans, we have crossed the bridge we built to the 21st century. Now, we must shape a 21st century American revolution -- of opportunity, responsibility and community. We must be now, as we were in the beginning, a new nation.

At the dawn of the last century, Theodore Roosevelt said, "the one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight...it should be the growing nation with a future that takes the long look ahead." So, tonight, let us take our long look ahead -- and set great goals for our nation.

* { To 21st century America, let us pledge these things: Every child will begin school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed. (Applause.) Every family will be able to succeed at home and at work, and no child will be raised in poverty. (Applause.) We will meet the challenge of the aging of America. We will assure quality, affordable health care, at last, for all Americans. (Applause.)

We will make America the safest big country on Earth. (Applause.) We will pay off our national debt for the first time since 1835. (Applause.) We will bring prosperity to every American community. We will reverse the course of climate change and leave a safer, cleaner planet. America will lead the world toward shared peace and prosperity, and the far frontiers of science and technology. And we will become at last what our founders pledged us to be so long ago -- one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (Applause.)

These are great goals, worthy of a great nation. We will not reach them all this year. Not even in this decade. But we will reach them. Let us remember that the first American Revolution was not won with a single shot; the continent was not settled in a single year. The lesson of our history -- and the lesson of the last seven years -- is that great goals are reached step by step, always building on our progress, always gaining ground.

Of course, you can't gain ground if you're standing still. And for too long this Congress has been standing still on some of our most pressing national priorities. So let's begin tonight with them.

Again, I ask you to pass a real patients' bill of rights. (Applause.) I ask you to pass common-sense gun safety legislation. (Applause.) I ask you to pass campaign finance reform. (Applause.) I ask you to vote up or down on judicial nominations and other important appointees. (Applause.) And, again I ask you -- I implore you -- to raise the minimum wage. (Applause.)

Now, two years ago -- let me try to balance the seesaw here -- (laughter) -- two years

ago, as we reached across party lines to reach our first balanced budget, I asked that we meet our responsibility to the next generation by maintaining our fiscal discipline. Because we refused to stray from that path, we are doing something that would have seemed unimaginable seven years ago. We are actually paying down the national debt. (Applause.)

Now, if we stay on this path, we can pay down the debt entirely in 13 just years now and make America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. (Applause.)

In 1993, we began to put our fiscal house in order with the Deficit Reduction Act, which you'll all remember won passages in both Houses by just a single vote. Your former colleague, my first Secretary of the Treasury, led that effort and sparked our long boom. He's here with us tonight. Lloyd Bentsen, you have served America well, and we thank you. (Applause.)

Beyond paying off the debt, we must ensure that the benefits of debt reduction go to preserving two of the most important guarantees we make to every American -- Social Security and Medicare. (Applause.) Tonight, I ask you to work with me to make a bipartisan down payment on Social Security reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction to the Social Security Trust Fund so that it will be strong and sound for the next 50 years. (Applause.)

 But this is just the start of our journey. We must also take the right steps toward reaching our great goals. First and foremost, we need a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every single child can learn. (Applause.) Because education is more important than ever, more than ever the key to our children's future, we must make sure all our children have that key. That means quality pre-school and after-school, the best trained teachers in the classroom, and college opportunities for all our children. (Applause.)

For seven years now, we've worked hard to improve our schools, with opportunity and responsibility -- investing more, but demanding more in turn. Reading, math, college entrance scores are up. Some of the most impressive gains are in schools in very poor neighborhoods.

But all successful schools have followed the same proven formula: higher standards, more accountability, and extra help so children who need it can get it to reach those standards. I have sent Congress a reform plan based on that formula. It holds states and school districts accountable for progress, and rewards them for results. Each year, our national government invests more than \$15 billion in our schools. It is time to support what works and stop supporting what doesn't. (Applause.)

Now, as we demand more from our schools, we should also invest more in our schools. (Applause.) Let's double our investment to help states and districts turn around their worst-performing schools, or shut them down. Let's double our investments in after-school and summer school programs, which boost achievement and keep people off the streets and out of trouble. (Applause.) If we do this, we can give every single child in every failing school in America -- everyone -- the chance to meet high standards.

Since 1993, we've nearly doubled our investment in Head Start and improved its quality. Tonight, I ask you for another \$1 billion for Head Start, the largest increase in the history of the program. (Applause.)

We know that children learn best in smaller classes with good teachers. For two years in a row, Congress has supported my plan to hire 100,000 new qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades. I thank you for that, and I ask you to make it three in a row.

(Applause.) And to make sure all teachers know the subjects they teach, tonight I propose a new teacher quality initiative -- to recruit more talented people into the classroom, reward good teachers for staying there, and give all teachers the training they need. (Applause.)

We know charter schools provide real public school choice. When I became President, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. Today, thanks to you, there are 1,700. I ask you now to help us meet our goal of 3,000 charter schools by next year. (Applause.)

We know we must connect all our classrooms to the Internet, and we're getting there. In 1994, only 3 percent of our classrooms were connected. Today, with the help of the Vice President's E-rate program, more than half of them are. And 90 percent of our schools have at least one Internet connection. (Applause.)

But we cannot finish the job when a third of all our schools are in serious disrepair. Many of them have walls and wires so old, they're too old for the Internet. So tonight, I propose to help 5,000 schools a year make immediate and urgent repairs; and again, to help build or modernize 6,000 more, to get students out of trailers and into high-tech classrooms. (Applause.)

I ask all of you to help me double our bipartisan Gear-Up program, which provides mentors for disadvantaged young people. If we double it, we can provide mentors for 1.4 million of them. (Applause.) Let's also offer these kids from disadvantaged backgrounds the same chance to take the same college test-prep courses wealthier students use to boost their test scores. (Applause.)

To make the American Dream achievable for all, we must make college affordable for all. For seven years, on a bipartisan basis, we have taken action toward that goal: larger Pell grants, more affordable student loans, education IRAs, and our HOPE scholarships, which have already benefitted 5 million young people.

Now, 67 percent of high school graduates are going on to college. That's up 10 percent since 1993. Yet millions of families still strain to pay college tuition. They need help. (Applause.) So I propose a landmark \$30-billion college opportunity tax cut -- a middle class tax deduction for up to \$10,000 in college tuition costs. (Applause.) The previous actions of this Congress have already made two years of college affordable for all. It's time to make four years of college affordable for all. (Applause.) If we take all these steps, we'll move a long way toward making sure every child starts school ready to learn and graduates ready to succeed.

We need a 21st century revolution to reward work and strengthen families, by giving every parent the tools to succeed at work and at the most important work of all -- raising children. That means making sure every family has health care and the support to care for aging parents, the tools to bring their children up right, and that no child grows up in poverty.

From my first days as President, we've worked to give families better access to better health care. In 1997, we passed the Children's Health Insurance Program -- CHIP -- so that workers who don't have coverage through their employers at least can get it for their children. So far, we've enrolled 2 million children; we're well on our way to our goal of 5 million.

But there are still more than 40 million of our fellow Americans without health insurance -- more than there were in 1993. Tonight I propose that we follow Vice President Gore's suggestion to make low income parents eligible for the insurance that covers their children. (Applause.) Together with our children's initiative -- think of this -- together

with our children's initiative, this action would enable us to cover nearly a quarter of all the uninsured people in America.

Again, I want to ask you to let people between the ages of 55 and 65 -- the fastest growing group of uninsured -- buy into Medicare. (Applause.) And this year I propose to give them a tax credit to make that choice an affordable one. I hope you will support that, as well. (Applause.)

When the baby boomers retire, Medicare will be faced with caring for twice as many of our citizens; yet, it is far from ready to do so. My generation must not ask our children's generation to shoulder our burden. We simply must act now to strengthen and modernize Medicare.

My budget includes a comprehensive plan to reform Medicare, to make it more efficient and competitive. And it dedicates nearly \$400 billion of our budget surplus to keep Medicare solvent past 2025. (Applause.) And, at long last, it also provides funds to give every senior a voluntary choice of affordable coverage for prescription drugs. (Applause.)

Lifesaving drugs are an indispensable part of modern medicine. No one creating a Medicare program today would even think of excluding coverage for prescription drugs. Yet more than three in five of our seniors now lack dependable drug coverage which can lengthen and enrich their lives. Millions of older Americans who need prescription drugs the most pay the highest prices for them. In good conscience, we cannot let another year pass without extending to all our seniors this lifeline of affordable prescription drugs. (Applause.)

Record numbers of Americans are providing for aging or ailing loved ones at home. It's a loving, but a difficult and often very expensive choice. Last year, I proposed a \$1,000 tax credit for long-term care. Frankly, it wasn't enough. This year, let's triple it, to \$3,000. (Applause.) But this year, let's pass it. (Applause.)

We also have to make needed investments to expand access to mental health care. I want to take a moment to thank the person who led our first White House Conference on Mental Health last year, and who for seven years has led all our efforts to break down the barriers to decent treatment of people with mental illness. Thank you, Tipper Gore. (Applause.)

Taken together, these proposals would mark the largest investment in health care in the 35 years since Medicare was created -- the largest investment in 35 years. That would be a big step toward assuring quality health care for all Americans, young and old. And I ask you to embrace them and pass them. (Applause.)

We must also make investments that reward work and support families. Nothing does that better than the Earned Income Tax Credit -- the EITC. (Applause.) The "E" in the EITC is about earning, working, taking responsibility and being rewarded for it. In my very first address to you, I asked Congress to greatly expand this credit; and you did. As a result, in 1998 alone, the EITC helped more than 4.3 million Americans work their way out of poverty toward the middle class. That's double the number in 1993.

Tonight, I propose another major expansion of the EITC: to reduce the marriage penalty, to make sure it rewards marriage as it rewards work -- (applause) -- and also, to expand the tax credit for families that have more than two children. It punishes people with more than two children today. (Applause.) Our proposal would allow families with three or more children to get up to \$1,100 more in tax relief. These are working families; their children should not be in poverty. (Applause.)

We also can't reward work and family unless men and women get equal pay for equal work. (Applause.) Today, the female unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in 46 years. Yet, women still only earn about 75 cents for every dollar men earn. We must do better, by providing the resources to enforce present equal pay laws; training more women for high-paying, high-tech jobs; and passing the Paycheck Fairness Act. (Applause.)

Many working parents spend up to a quarter -- a quarter -- of their income on child care. Last year, we helped parents provide child care for about 2 million children. My child care initiative, before you now, along with funds already secured in welfare reform, would make child care better, safer and more affordable for another 400,000 children. I ask you to pass that. They need it out there -- (applause.)

For hard-pressed middle-income families, we should also expand the child care tax credit. And I believe strongly we should take the next big step and make that tax credit refundable for low-income families. (Applause.) For people making under \$30,000 a year, that could mean up to \$2,400 for child care costs. You know, we all say we're pro-work and pro-family. Passing this proposal would prove it. (Applause.)

Tens of millions of Americans live from paycheck to paycheck. As hard as they work, they still don't have the opportunity to save. Too few can make use of IRAs and 401-K plans. We should do more to help all working families save and accumulate wealth. That's the idea behind the Individual Development Accounts, the IDAs. I ask you to take that idea to a new level, with new Retirement Savings Accounts that enable every low- and moderate-income family in America to save for retirement, a first home, a medical emergency, or a college education. I propose to match their contributions, however small, dollar for dollar, every year they save. And I propose to give a major new tax credit to any small business that will provide a meaningful pension to its workers. Those people ought to have retirement as well as the rest of us. (Applause.)

Nearly one in three American children grows up without a father. These children are five times more likely to live in poverty than children with both parents at home. Clearly, demanding and supporting responsible fatherhood is critical to lifting all children out of poverty. We've doubled child support collections since 1992. And I'm proposing to you tough new measures to hold still more fathers responsible.

But we should recognize that a lot of fathers want to do right by their children, but need help to do it. Carlos Rosas of St. Paul, Minnesota, wanted to do right by his son, and he got the help to do it. Now he's got a good job and he supports his little boy. My budget will help 40,000 more fathers make the same choices Carlos Rosas did. I thank him for being here tonight. (Applause.) Stand up, Carlos. Thank you. (Applause.)

If there is any single issue on which we should be able to reach across party lines, it is in our common commitment to reward work and strengthen families, similar to what we did last year. We came together to help people with disabilities keep their health insurance when they go to work. And I thank you for that. Thanks to overwhelming bipartisan support from this Congress, we have improved foster care. We've helped those young people who leave it when they turn 18, and we have dramatically increased the number of foster care children going into adoptive homes. I thank all of you for all of that. (Applause.)

Of course, I am forever grateful to the person who has led our efforts from the beginning, and who's worked so tirelessly for children and families for 30 years now: my wife, Hillary. And I thank her. (Applause.)

If we take the steps I've just discussed, we can go a long, long way toward empowering parents to succeed at home and at work, and ensuring that no child is raised in poverty.

We can make these vital investments in health care, education, support for working families, and still offer tax cuts to help pay for college, for retirement, to care for aging parents, to reduce the marriage penalty. We can do these things without forsaking the path of fiscal discipline that got us to this point here tonight.

Indeed, we must make these investments and these tax cuts in the context of a balanced budget that strengthens and extends the life of Social Security and Medicare and pays down the national debt. (Applause.)

Crime in America has dropped for the past seven years -- that's the longest decline on record -- thanks to a national consensus we helped to forge on community police, sensible gun safety laws, and effective prevention. But nobody -- nobody here, nobody in America -- believes we're safe enough. So again, I ask you to set a higher goal. Let's make this country the safest big country in the world. (Applause.)

Last fall, Congress supported my plan to hire, in addition to the 100,000 community police we've already funded, 50,000 more, concentrated in high-crime neighborhoods. I ask your continued support for that.

Soon after the Columbine tragedy, Congress considered common-sense gun legislation, to require Brady background checks at the gun shows, child safety locks for new handguns, and a ban on the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. With courage -- and a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President -- (applause) -- the Senate faced down the gun lobby, stood up for the American people, and passed this legislation. But the House failed to follow suit.

Now, we have all seen what happens when guns fall into the wrong hands. Daniel Mauser was only 15 years old when he was gunned down at Columbine. He was an amazing kid -- a straight-A student, a good skier. Like all parents who lose their children, his father Tom has borne unimaginable grief. Somehow he has found the strength to honor his son by transforming his grief into action. Earlier this month, he took a leave of absence from his job to fight for tougher gun safety laws. I pray that his courage and wisdom will at long last move this Congress to make common-sense gun legislation the very next order of business. (Applause.)

Tom Mauser, stand up. We thank you for being here tonight. (Applause.) Tom. Thank you, Tom. (Applause.)

We must strengthen our gun laws and enforce those already on the books better. (Applause.) Federal gun crime prosecutions are up 16 percent since I took office. But we must do more. I propose to hire more federal and local gun prosecutors and more ATF agents to crack down on illegal gun traffickers and bad-apple dealers. And we must give them the enforcement tools that they need, tools to trace every gun and every bullet used in every gun crime in the United States. I ask you to help us do that. (Applause.)

Every state in this country already requires hunters and automobile drivers to have a license. I think they ought to do the same thing for handgun purchases. (Applause.) Now, specifically, I propose a plan to ensure that all new handgun buyers must first have a photo license from their state showing they passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course, before they get the gun. I hope you'll help me pass that in this Congress. (Applause.)

Listen to this -- listen to this. The accidental gun rate -- the accidental gun death rate of children under 15 in the United States is nine times higher than in the other 25 industrialized countries combined. Now, technologies now exist that could lead to guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them. I ask Congress to fund research into smart gun technology, to save these children's lives. (Applause.) I ask responsible leaders

in the gun industry to work with us on smart guns, and other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands, to keep our children safe.

You know, every parent I know worries about the impact of violence in the media on their children. I want to begin by thanking the entertainment industry for accepting my challenge to put voluntary ratings on TV programs and video and Internet games. But, frankly, the ratings are too numerous, diverse and confusing to be really useful to parents. So tonight, I ask the industry to accept the First Lady's challenge to develop a single voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment that is easier for parents to understand and enforce. (Applause.) The steps I outline will take us well on our way to making America the safest big country in the world.

Now, to keep our historic economic expansion going -- the subject of a lot of discussion in this community and others -- I believe we need a 21st century revolution to open new markets, start new businesses, hire new workers right here in America -- in our inner cities, poor rural areas, and Native American reservations. (Applause.)

Our nation's prosperity hasn't yet reached these places. Over the last six months, I've traveled to a lot of them, joined by many of you, and many far-sighted business people, to shine a spotlight on the enormous potential in communities from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta, from Watts to the Pine Ridge Reservation. Everywhere I go, I meet talented people eager for opportunity, and able to work. Tonight I ask you, let's put them to work. (Applause.) For business, it's the smart thing to do. For America, it's the right thing to do. And let me ask you something -- if we don't do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to it? (Applause.)

So I ask Congress to give businesses the same incentives to invest in America's new markets they now have to invest in markets overseas. (Applause.) Tonight, I propose a large New Markets tax credit and other incentives to spur \$22 billion in private-sector capital to create new businesses and new investments in our inner cities and rural areas. (Applause.)

Because empowerment zones have been creating these opportunities for five years now, I also ask you to increase incentives to invest in them and to create more of them. (Applause.)

And let me say to all of you again what I have tried to say at every turn -- this is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. Giving people a chance to live their dreams is an American issue. (Applause.)

Mr. Speaker, it was a powerful moment last November when you joined Reverend Jesse Jackson and me in your home state of Illinois, and committed to working toward our common goal, by combining the best ideas from both sides of the aisle. I want to thank you again, and to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with you. This is a worthy, joint endeavor. Thank you. (Applause.)

I also ask you to make special efforts to address the areas of our nation with the highest rates of poverty -- our Native American reservations and the Mississippi Delta. My budget includes \$110-million initiative to promote economic development in the Delta, and a billion dollars to increase economic opportunity, health care, education and law enforcement for our Native American communities. (Applause.) In this new century -- we should begin this new century by honoring our historic responsibility to empower the first Americans. (Applause.) And I want to thank tonight the leaders and the members from both parties who've expressed to me an interest in working with us on these efforts. They are profoundly important.

There's another part of our American community in trouble tonight -- our family farmers.

When I signed the Farm Bill in 1996, I said there was great danger it would work well in good times, but not in bad. Well, droughts, floods, and historically low prices have made these times very bad for the farmers. We must work together to strengthen the farm safety net, invest in land conservation, and create some new markets for them by expanding our programs for bio-based fuels and products. Please, they need help -- let's do it together. (Applause.)

Opportunity for all requires something else today -- having access to a computer and knowing how to use it. That means we must close the digital divide between those who've got the tools and those who don't. (Applause.)

Connecting classrooms and libraries to the Internet is crucial, but it's just a start. My budget ensures that all new teachers are trained to teach 21st century skills, and it creates technology centers in 1,000 communities to serve adults. This spring, I'll invite high-tech leaders to join me on another New Markets tour, to close the digital divide and open opportunity for our people.

I want to thank the high-tech companies that already are doing so much in this area. I hope the new tax incentives I have proposed will get all the rest of them to join us. This is a national crusade. We have got to do this, and do it quickly. (Applause.)

Now, again I say to you, these are steps, but step by step, we can go a long way toward our goal of bringing opportunity to every community.

To realize the full possibilities of this economy, we must reach beyond our own borders, to shape the revolution that is tearing down barriers and building new networks among nations and individuals, and economies and cultures: globalization. It's the central reality of our time.

Of course, change this profound is both liberating and threatening to people. But there's no turning back. And our open, creative society stands to benefit more than any other -- if we understand, and act on, the realities of interdependence. We have to be at the center of every vital global network, as a good neighbor and a good partner. We have to recognize that we cannot build our future without helping others to build theirs.

The first thing we have got to do is to forge a new consensus on trade. Now, those of us who believe passionately in the power of open trade, we have to ensure that it lifts both our living standards and our values, never tolerating abusive child labor or a race to the bottom in the environment and worker protection. But others must recognize that open markets and rule-based trade are the best engines we know of for raising living standards, reducing global poverty and environmental destruction, and assuring the free flow of ideas.

I believe as strongly tonight as I did the first day I got here, the only direction forward for America on trade -- the only direction for America on trade is to keep going forward. I ask you to help me forge that consensus. (Applause.)

We have to make developing economies our partners in prosperity. That's why I would like to ask you again to finalize our groundbreaking African and Caribbean Basin trade initiatives. (Applause.)

But globalization is about more than economics. Our purpose must be to bring together the world around freedom and democracy and peace, and to oppose those who would tear it apart. Here are the fundamental challenges I believe America must meet to shape the 21st century world.

First, we must continue to encourage our former adversaries, Russia and China, to

emerge as stable, prosperous, democratic nations. Both are being held back today from reaching their full potential: Russia by the legacy of communism, an economy in turmoil, a cruel and self-defeating war in Chechnya; China by the illusion that it can buy stability at the expense of freedom.

But think how much has changed in the past decade: 5,000 former Soviet nuclear weapons taken out of commission; Russian soldiers actually serving with ours in the Balkans; Russian people electing their leaders for the first time in a thousand years; and in China, an economy more open to the world than ever before.

Of course, no one, not a single person in this chamber tonight, can know for sure what direction these great nations will take. But we do know for sure that we can choose what we do. And we should do everything in our power to increase the chance that they will choose wisely, to be constructive members of our global community.

That's why we should support those Russians who are struggling for a democratic, prosperous future; continue to reduce both our nuclear arsenals; and help Russia to safeguard weapons and materials that remain.

And that's why I believe Congress should support the agreement we negotiated to bring China into the WTO, by passing Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China as soon as possible this year. (Applause.)

I think you ought to do it for two reasons. First of all, our markets are already open to China; this agreement will open China's markets to us. (Applause.) And, second, it will plainly advance the cause of peace in Asia and promote the cause of change in China. No, we don't know where it's going. All we can do is decide what we're going to do. But when all is said and done, we need to know we did everything we possibly could to maximize the chance that China will choose the right future. (Applause.)

A second challenge we've got is to protect our own security from conflicts that pose the risk of wider war and threaten our common humanity. We can't prevent every conflict or stop every outrage. But where our interests are at stake and we can make a difference, we should be, and we must be, peacemakers.

We should be proud of our role in bringing the Middle East closer to a lasting peace; building peace in Northern Ireland; working for peace in East Timor and Africa; promoting reconciliation between Greece and Turkey and in Cyprus; working to defuse these crises between India and Pakistan; in defending human rights and religious freedom. And we should be proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces and those of our allies who stopped the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, enabling a million people to return to their homes. (Applause.)

When Slobodan Milosevic unleashed his terror on Kosovo, Captain John Cherrey was one of the brave airmen who turned the tide. And when another American plane was shot down over Serbia, he flew into the teeth of enemy air defenses to bring his fellow pilot home. Thanks to our Armed Forces' skill and bravery, we prevailed in Kosovo without losing a single American in combat. (Applause.) I want to introduce Captain Cherrey to you. We honor Captain Cherrey, and we promise you, Captain, we'll finish the job you began. Stand up so we can see you. (Applause.)

A third challenge we have is to keep this inexorable march of technology from giving terrorists and potentially hostile nations the means to undermine our defenses. Keep in mind, the same technological advances that have shrunk cell phones to fit in the palms of our hands can also make weapons of terror easier to conceal and easier to use.

We must meet this threat by making effective agreements to restrain nuclear and missile

programs in North Korea; curbing the flow of lethal technology to Iran; preventing Iraq from threatening its neighbors; increasing our preparedness against chemical and biological attack; protecting our vital computer systems from hackers and criminals; and developing a system to defend against new missile threats -- while working to preserve our ABM missile treaty with Russia. We must do all these things.

I predict to you, when most of us are long gone, but some time in the next 10 to 20 years, the major security threat this country will face will come from the enemies of the nation state: the narco-traffickers and the terrorists and the organized criminals, who will be organized together, working together, with increasing access to ever-more sophisticated chemical and biological weapons.

And I want to thank the Pentagon and others for doing what they're doing right now to try to help protect us and plan for that, so that our defenses will be strong. I ask for your support to ensure they can succeed. (Applause.)

I also want to ask you for a constructive bipartisan dialogue this year to work to build a consensus which I hope will eventually lead to the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. (Applause.)

I hope we can also have a constructive effort to meet the challenge that is presented to our planet by the huge gulf between rich and poor. We cannot accept a world in which part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy, and the rest live on the bare edge of survival. I think we have to do our part to change that -- with expanded trade, expanded aid, and the expansion of freedom.

This is interesting -- from Nigeria to Indonesia, more people got the right to choose their leaders in 1999 than in 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell. We've got to stand by these democracies -- including, and especially tonight, Colombia, which is fighting narco-traffickers, for its own people's lives and our children's lives. I have proposed a strong two-year package to help Colombia win this fight. I want to thank the leaders in both parties in both Houses for listening to me and the President of Colombia about it. We have got to pass this. I want to ask your help. A lot is riding on it. And it's so important for the long-term stability of our country, and for what happens in Latin America.

I also want you to know I'm going to send you new legislation to go after what these drug barons value the most -- their money. And I hope you'll pass that as well. (Applause.)

In a world where over a billion people live on less than a dollar a day, we also have got to do our part in the global endeavor to reduce the debts of the poorest countries, so they can invest in education, health care and economic growth. That's what the Pope and other religious leaders have urged us to do. And last year, Congress made a down payment on America's share. I ask you to continue that. I thank you for what you did, and ask you to stay the course. (Applause.)

I also want to say that America must help more nations to break the bonds of disease. Last year in Africa, 10 times as many people died from AIDS as were killed in wars -- 10 times. The budget I give you invests \$150 million more in the fight against this and other infectious killers. And today, I propose a tax credit to speed the development of vaccines for diseases like malaria, TB and AIDS. I ask the private sector and our partners around the world to join us in embracing this cause. We can save millions of lives together, and we ought to do it. (Applause.)

I also want to mention our final challenge, which, as always, is the most important. I ask you to pass a national security budget that keeps our military the best-trained and

best-equipped in the world, with heightened readiness and 21st century weapons; which raises salaries for our servicemen and women; which protects our veterans; which fully funds the diplomacy that keeps our soldiers out of war; which makes good on our commitment to pay our U.N. dues and arrears. I ask you to pass this budget. (Applause.)

I also want to say something, if I might, very personal tonight. The American people watching us at home, with the help of all the commentators, can tell from who stands and who sits, and who claps and who doesn't, that there's still modest differences of opinion in this room. (Laughter.) But I want to thank you for something, every one of you. I want to thank you for the extraordinary support you have given -- Republicans and Democrats alike -- to our men and women in uniform. I thank you for that. (Applause.)

I also want to thank, especially, two people. First, I want to thank our Secretary of Defense, Bill Cohen, for symbolizing our bipartisan commitment to national security. Thank you, sir. (Applause.) Even more, I want to thank his wife, Janet, who, more than any other American citizen, has tirelessly traveled this world to show the support we all feel for our troops. Thank you, Janet Cohen. I appreciate that. Thank you. (Applause.)

These are the challenges we have to meet so that we can lead the world toward peace and freedom in an era of globalization.

I want to tell you that I am very grateful for many things as President. But one of the things I'm grateful for is the opportunity that the Vice President and I have had to finally put to rest the bogus idea that you cannot grow the economy and protect the environment at the same time. (Applause.)

As our economy has grown, we've rid more than 500 neighborhoods of toxic waste, ensured cleaner air and water for millions of people. In the past three months alone, we've helped preserve 40 million acres of roadless lands in the national forests, created three new national monuments.

But as our communities grow, our commitment to conservation must continue to grow. Tonight, I propose creating a permanent conservation fund, to restore wildlife, protect coastlines, save natural treasures, from the California redwoods to the Florida Everglades. (Applause.)

This Lands Legacy endowment would represent by far the most enduring investment in land preservation ever proposed in this House. I hope we can get together with all the people with different ideas and do this. This is a gift we should give to our children and our grandchildren for all time, across party lines. We can make an agreement to do this. (Applause.)

Last year, the Vice President launched a new effort to make communities more liberal -- livable -- (laughter) -- liberal, I know. (Laughter and applause.) Wait a minute, I've got a punchline now. That's this year's agenda; last year was livable, right? (Laughter.) That's what Senator Lott is going to say in the commentary afterwards. (Laughter.) To make our communities more livable. This is big business. This is a big issue. What does that mean? You ask anybody that lives in an unlivable community, and they'll tell you. They want their kids to grow up next to parks, not parking lots; the parents don't have to spend all their time stalled in traffic when they could be home with their children.

Tonight, I ask you to support new funding for the following things, to make American communities for liberal -- livable. (Laughter and applause.) I've done pretty well with this speech, but I can't say that. (Applause.)

One, I want you to help us to do three things. We need more funding for advanced transit systems. (Applause.) We need more funding for saving open spaces in places of heavy

development. (Applause.) And we need more funding -- this ought to have bipartisan appeal -- we need more funding for helping major cities around the Great Lakes protect their waterways and enhance their quality of life. We need these things and I want you to help us. (Applause.)

The greatest environmental challenge of the new century is global warming. The scientists tell us the 1990s were the hottest decade of the entire millennium. If we fail to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, deadly heat waves and droughts will become more frequent, coastal areas will flood, and economies will be disrupted. That is going to happen, unless we act.

Many people in the United States -- some people in this chamber -- and lots of folks around the world still believe you cannot cut greenhouse gas emissions without slowing economic growth. In the Industrial Age that may well have been true. But in this digital economy, it is not true anymore. New technologies make it possible to cut harmful emissions and provide even more growth.

For example, just last week, automakers unveiled cars that get 70 to 80 miles a gallon -- the fruits of a unique research partnership between government and industry. And before you know it, efficient production of bio-fuels will give us the equivalent of hundreds of miles from a gallon of gasoline.

To speed innovation in these kind of technologies, I think we should give a major tax incentive to business for the production of clean energy, and to families for buying energy-saving homes and appliances and the next generation of super-efficient cars when they hit the showroom floor. I also ask the auto industry to use the available technologies to make all new cars more fuel-efficient right away.

And I ask this Congress to do something else. Please help us make more of our clean energy technology available to the developing world. That will create cleaner growth abroad and a lot more new jobs here in the United States of America. (Applause.)

In the new century, innovations in science and technology will be the key not only to the health of the environment, but to miraculous improvements in the quality of our lives and advances in the economy. Later this year, researchers will complete the first draft of the entire human genome, the very blueprint of life. It is important for all our fellow Americans to recognize that federal tax dollars have funded much of this research, and that this and other wise investments in science are leading to a revolution in our ability to detect, treat, and prevent disease.

For example, researchers have identified genes that cause Parkinson's, diabetes, and certain kinds of cancer -- they are designed precision therapies that will block the harmful effect of these genes for good. Researchers already are using this new technique to target and destroy cells that cause breast cancer. Soon, we may be able to use it to prevent the onset of Alzheimer's. Scientists are also working on an artificial retina to help many blind people to see -- and listen to this -- microchips that would actually directly stimulate damaged spinal cords in a way that could allow people now paralyzed to stand up and walk. (Applause.)

These kinds of innovations are also propelling our remarkable prosperity. Information technology only includes 8 percent of our employment, but now it counts for a third of our economic growth -- along with jobs that pay, by the way, about 80 percent above the private sector average. Again, we ought to keep in mind, government-funded research brought supercomputers, the Internet, and communications satellites into being. Soon researchers will bring us devices that can translate foreign languages as fast as you can talk; materials 10 times stronger than steel at a fraction of the weight; and -- this is unbelievable to me -- molecular computers the size of a tear drop with the power of

today's fastest supercomputers.

To accelerate the march of discovery across all these disciplines in science and technology, I ask you to support my recommendation of an unprecedented \$3 billion in the 21st Century Research Fund, the largest increase in civilian research in a generation. We owe it to our future. (Applause.)

Now, these new breakthroughs have to be used in ways that reflect our values. First and foremost, we have to safeguard our citizens' privacy. Last year, we proposed to protect every citizen's medical record. This year, we will finalize those rules. We've also taken the first steps to protect the privacy of bank and credit card records and other financial statements. Soon I will send legislation to you to finish that job. We must also act to prevent any genetic discrimination whatever by employers or insurers. I hope you will support that. (Applause.)

These steps will allow us to lead toward the far frontiers of science and technology. They will enhance our health, the environment, the economy in ways we can't even imagine today. But we all know that at a time when science, technology and the forces of globalization are bringing so many changes into all our lives, it's more important than ever that we strengthen the bonds that root us in our local communities and in our national community.

No tie binds different people together like citizen service. There's a new spirit of service in America -- a movement we've tried to support with AmeriCorps, expanded Peace Corps, unprecedented new partnerships with businesses, foundations, community groups. Partnerships, for example, like the one that enlisted 12,000 companies which have now moved 650,000 of our fellow citizens from welfare to work. Partnerships to battle drug abuse, AIDS, teach young people to read, save America's treasures, strengthen the arts, fight teen pregnancy, prevent violence among young people, promote racial healing. The American people are working together.

But we should do more to help Americans help each other. First, we should help faith-based organizations to do more to fight poverty and drug abuse, and help people get back on the right track, with initiatives like Second Chance Homes that do so much to help unwed teen mothers. Second, we should support Americans who tithe and contribute to charities, but don't earn enough to claim a tax deduction for it. (Applause.) Tonight, I propose new tax incentives that would allow low- and middle-income citizens who don't itemize to get that deduction. It's nothing but fair, and it will get more people to give. (Applause.)

We should do more to help new immigrants to fully participate in our community. That's why I recommend spending more to teach them civics and English. And since everybody in our community counts, we've got to make sure everyone is counted in this year's census. (Applause.)

Within 10 years -- just 10 years -- there will be no majority race in our largest state of California. In a little more than 50 years, there will be no majority race in America. In a more interconnected world, this diversity can be our greatest strength. Just look around this chamber. Look around. We have members in this Congress from virtually every racial, ethnic, and religious background. And I think you would agree that America is stronger because of it. (Applause.)

You also have to agree that all those differences you just clapped for all too often spark hatred and division even here at home. Just in the last couple of years, we've seen a man dragged to death in Texas just because he was black. We saw a young man murdered in Wyoming just because he was gay. Last year, we saw the shootings of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Jewish children just because of who they were. This is

not the American way, and we must draw the line. (Applause.)

I ask you to draw that line by passing without delay the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. (Applause.) And I ask you to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. (Applause.)

Finally tonight, I propose the largest-ever investment in our civil rights laws for enforcement, because no American should be subjected to discrimination in finding a home, getting a job, going to school, or securing a loan. Protections in law should be protections in fact. (Applause.)

Last February, because I thought this was so important, I created the White House Office of One America to promote racial reconciliation. That's what one of my personal heroes, Hank Aaron, has done all his life. From his days as our all-time home run king to his recent acts of healing, he has always brought people together. We should follow his example, and we're honored to have him with us tonight. Stand up, Hank Aaron. (Applause.)

I just want to say one more thing about this, and I want every one of you to think about this the next time you get mad at one of your colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This fall, at the White House, Hillary had one of her millennium dinners, and we had this very distinguished scientist there, who is an expert in this whole work in the human genome. And he said that we are all, regardless of race, genetically 99.9 percent the same.

Now, you may find that uncomfortable when you look around here. (Laughter.) But it is worth remembering. We can laugh about this, but you think about it. Modern science has confirmed what ancient faiths has always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity. Therefore, we should do more than just tolerate our diversity -- we should honor it and celebrate it. (Applause.)

My fellow Americans, every time I prepare for the State of the Union, I approach it with hope and expectation and excitement for our nation. But tonight is very special, because we stand on the mountain top of a new millennium. Behind us we can look back and see the great expanse of American achievement; and before us we can see even greater, grander frontiers of possibility. We should, all of us, be filled with gratitude and humility for our present progress and prosperity. We should be filled with awe and joy at what lies over the horizon. And we should be filled with absolute determination to make the most of it.

You know, when the framers finished crafting our Constitution in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin stood in Independence Hall and he reflected on the carving of the sun that was on the back of a chair he saw. The sun was low on the horizon. So he said this -- he said, "I've often wondered whether that sun was rising or setting. Today," Franklin said, "I have the happiness to know it's a rising sun." Today, because each succeeding generation of Americans has kept the fire of freedom burning brightly, lighting those frontiers of possibility, we all still bask in the glow and the warmth of Mr. Franklin's rising sun.

After 224 years, the American revolution continues. We remain a new nation. And as long as our dreams outweigh our memories, America will be forever young. That is our destiny. And this is our moment.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America. (Applause.)

END 11:08 P.M. EST

State of the Union Address

Date:

Policy Proposals:

Jan. 1999

- Save Social Security (by investing 60% of budget surplus over next 15 years).
- Shore up Medicare (by giving 1 of every 6 dollars in the surplus to it).
- New pension initiative:
 - ↳ 11% of surplus to establish Universal Savings accounts (~~the~~ USAaccounts)
- Long term care tax credit (~~the~~ \$1,000)
- Education:
 - ↳ Education Accountability Act to embed reforms at the district level:
 - (1) Schools must end social promotion (^{Summer school finally increased to make up for lagging students})
 - (2) All states must turn around low performing schools
 - (3) Teacher quality improvements
 - prospective teachers must major in their
 - Performance exams for new teachers
 - College scholarships for urban/rural teachers
 - (4) Public school choice: 3,000 charter schools "early in the next century"
 - (5) Sensible discipline procedures in all schools
- Commitment to workers:
 - Raise minimum wage by \$1 (to ~~the~~ \$6.25) over 2 years
 - Equal pay for men & women
 - Child care tax credits (also should include a credit for parents who stay at home)
 - Extend FMLA to employees of smaller businesses
 - No discrimination in workplace on basis of children

- Health Care

- Patient's Bill of Rights
- Privacy guarantees for electronic health records
- Expand eligibility for people to buy into Medicare
- Expand efforts to treat & prevent mental illness

- Tobacco

- Reaffirm the FDA's authority to protect children from tobacco
- * - Justice Dept. is preparing a litigation plan to take tobacco companies to court

- Family - Strengthening Initiatives / Welfare & Work

- Rapid response teams for towns hurt by business closings
- Creation of American Private Investment Corporation
 - ↳ Part of plan to give \$15 billion in private money to bring jobs to inner cities & rural areas
- Create a "Family Farm Safety Net"

- Crime:

- 21st century Crime Bill
 - 50,000 more cops / above the 100,000 community police officers already working
 - crime-mapping computers
 - digital mugshots
- Restore 5-day waiting period
- Pass legislation requiring trigger locks
- Pass Hate - Crime Prevention Act

President Clinton Delivers 1999 State Of The Union Address**THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary**

For Immediate Release

January 19, 1999

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS**United States Capitol
Washington, D.C.

9:10 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, members of Congress, honored guests, my fellow Americans: Tonight, I have the honor of reporting to you on the State of the Union.

Let me begin by saluting the new Speaker of the House, and thanking him, especially tonight, for extending an invitation to two special guests sitting in the gallery with Mrs. Hastert: Lyn Gibson and Wei Ling Chestnut are the widows of the two brave Capitol Hill police officers who gave their lives to defend freedom's house. (Applause.)

Mr. Speaker, at your swearing-in, you asked us all to work together in a spirit of civility and bipartisanship. Mr. Speaker, let's do exactly that. (Applause.)

Tonight, I stand before you to report that America has created the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history -- (applause) -- with nearly 18 million new jobs, wages rising at more than twice the rate of inflation, the highest home ownership in history, the smallest welfare rolls in 30 years, and the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957. (Applause.)

For the first time in three decades, the budget is balanced. (Applause.) From a deficit of \$290 billion in 1992, we had a surplus of \$70 billion last year. And now we are on course for budget surpluses for the next 25 years. (Applause.)

Thanks to the pioneering leadership of all of you, we have the lowest violent crime rate in a quarter century and the cleanest environment in a quarter century. America is a strong force for peace from Northern Ireland to Bosnia to the Middle East.

Thanks to the leadership of Vice President Gore, we have a government for the Information Age. Once again, a government that is a progressive instrument of the common good, rooted in our oldest values of opportunity, responsibility and community; devoted to fiscal responsibility; determined to give our people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives in the 21st century -- a 21st century government for 21st century America.

My fellow Americans, I stand before you tonight to report that the state of our union is strong. (Applause.)

America is working again. The promise of our future is limitless. But we cannot realize that promise if we allow the hum of our prosperity to lull us into complacency. How we fare as a nation far into the 21st century depends upon what we do as a nation today.

So with our budget surplus growing, our economy expanding, our confidence rising, now is the moment for this generation to meet our historic responsibility to the 21st century.

Our fiscal discipline gives us an unsurpassed opportunity to address a remarkable new challenge -- the aging of America. With the number of elderly Americans set to double by 2030, the baby boom will become a senior boom. So first, and above all, we must save Social Security for the 21st century. (Applause.)

Early in this century, being old meant being poor. When President Roosevelt created Social Security, thousands wrote to thank him for eliminating what one woman called the "stark terror of penniless, helpless old age." Even today, without Social Security, half our nation's elderly would be forced into poverty.

Today, Social Security is strong. But by 2013, payroll taxes will no longer be sufficient to cover monthly payments. By 2032, the trust fund will be exhausted and Social Security will be unable to pay the full benefits older Americans have been promised.

The best way to keep Social Security a rock-solid guarantee is not to make drastic cuts in benefits, not to raise payroll tax rates, not to drain resources from Social Security in the name of saving it. Instead, I propose that we make an historic decision to invest the surplus to save Social Security. (Applause.)

Specifically, I propose that we commit 60 percent of the budget surplus for the next 15 years to Social Security, investing a small portion in the private sector, just as any private or state government pension would do. This will earn a higher return and keep Social Security sound for 55 years.

But we must aim higher. We should put Social Security on a sound footing for the next 75 years. We should reduce poverty among elderly women, who are nearly twice as likely to be poor as our other seniors. (Applause.) And we should eliminate the limits on what seniors on Social Security can earn. (Applause.)

Now, these changes will require difficult but fully achievable choices over and above the dedication of the surplus. They must be made on a bipartisan basis. They should be made this year. So let me say to you tonight, I reach out my hand to all of you in both Houses, in both parties, and ask that we join together in saying to the American people: We will save Social Security now. (Applause.)

Now, last year we wisely reserved all of the surplus until we knew what it would take to save Social Security. Again, I say, we shouldn't spend any of it -- not any of it -- until after Social Security is truly saved. First things first. (Applause.)

Second, once we have saved Social Security, we must fulfill our obligation to save and improve Medicare. Already, we have extended the life of the Medicare trust fund by 10 years -- but we should extend it for at least another decade. Tonight, I propose that we use one out of every \$6 in the surplus for the next 15 years to guarantee the soundness of Medicare until the year 2020. (Applause.)

But, again, we should aim higher. We must be willing to work in a bipartisan way and look at new ideas, including the upcoming report of the bipartisan Medicare Commission. If we work together, we can secure Medicare for the next two decades and cover the greatest growing need of seniors -- affordable prescription drugs. (Applause.)

Third, we must help all Americans, from their first day on the job -- to save, to invest, to create wealth. From its beginning, Americans have supplemented Social Security with private pensions and savings. Yet, today, millions of people retire with little to live on other than Social Security. Americans living longer than ever simply must save more than ever.

Therefore, in addition to saving Social Security and Medicare, I propose a new pension initiative for retirement security in the 21st century. I propose that we use a little over 11 percent of the surplus to establish universal savings accounts -- USA accounts -- to give all Americans the means to save. With

these new accounts Americans can invest as they choose and receive funds to match a portion of their savings, with extra help for those least able to save. USA accounts will help all Americans to share in our nation's wealth and to enjoy a more secure retirement. I ask you to support them. (Applause.)

Fourth, we must invest in long-term care. (Applause.) I propose a tax credit of \$1,000 for the aged, ailing or disabled, and the families who care for them. Long-term care will become a bigger and bigger challenge with the aging of America, and we must do more to help our families deal with it. (Applause.)

I was born in 1946, the first year of the baby boom. I can tell you that one of the greatest concerns of our generation is our absolute determination not to let our growing old place an intolerable burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. Our economic success and our fiscal discipline now give us an opportunity to lift that burden from their shoulders, and we should take it. (Applause.)

Saving Social Security, Medicare, creating USA accounts-- this is the right way to use the surplus. If we do so -- if we do so -- we will still have resources to meet critical needs in education and defense. And I want to point out that this proposal is fiscally sound. Listen to this: If we set aside 60 percent of the surplus for Social Security and 16 percent for Medicare, over the next 15 years, that saving will achieve the lowest level of publicly-held debt since right before World War I, in 1917. (Applause.)

So with these four measures -- saving Social Security, strengthening Medicare, establishing the USA accounts, supporting long-term care -- we can begin to meet our generation's historic responsibility to establish true security for 21st century seniors.

Now, there are more children from more diverse backgrounds in our public schools than at any time in our history. Their education must provide the knowledge and nurture the creativity that will allow our entire nation to thrive in the new economy.

Today we can say something we couldn't say six years ago: With tax credits and more affordable student loans, with more work-study grants and more Pell grants, with education IRAs and the new HOPE Scholarship tax cut that more than five million Americans will receive this year, we have finally opened the doors of college to all Americans. (Applause.) With our support, nearly every state has set higher academic standards for public schools, and a voluntary national test is being developed to measure the progress of our students. With over \$1 billion in discounts available this year, we are well on our way to our goal of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet.

Last fall, you passed our proposal to start hiring 100,000 new teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. Now I ask you to finish the job. (Applause.)

You know, our children are doing better. SAT scores are up; math scores have risen in nearly all grades. But there's a problem. While our 4th graders outperform their peers in other countries in math and science, our 8th graders are around average, and our 12th graders rank near the bottom. We must do better. Now, each year the national government invests more than \$15 billion in our public schools. I believe we must change the way we invest that money, to support what works and to stop supporting what does not work. (Applause.)

First, later this year, I will send to Congress a plan that, for the first time, holds states and school districts accountable for progress and rewards them for results. My Education Accountability Act will require every school district receiving federal help to take the following five steps.

First, all schools must end social promotion. (Applause.) No child should graduate from high school with a diploma he or she can't read. We do our children no favors when we allow them to pass from grade to grade without mastering the material.

But we can't just hold students back because the system fails them. So my balanced budget triples the funding for summer school and after-school programs, to keep a million children learning. (Applause.)

Now, if you doubt this will work, just look at Chicago, which ended social promotion and made summer

school mandatory for those who don't master the basics. Math and reading scores are up three years running -- with some of the biggest gains in some of the poorest neighborhoods. It will work, and we should do it. (Applause.)

Second, all states and school districts must turn around their worst-performing schools -- or shut them down. (Applause.) That's the policy established in North Carolina by Governor Jim Hunt. North Carolina made the biggest gains in test scores in the nation last year. Our budget includes \$200 million to help states turn around their own failing schools.

Third, all states and school districts must be held responsible for the quality of their teachers. The great majority of our teachers do a fine job. But in too many schools, teachers don't have college majors -- or even minors -- in the subjects they teach. New teachers should be required to pass performance exams, and all teachers should know the subjects they're teaching. (Applause.) This year's balanced budget contains resources to help them reach higher standards.

And to attract talented young teachers to the toughest assignments, I recommend a sixfold increase in our program for college scholarships for students who commit to teach in the inner cities and isolated rural areas and Indian communities. Let us bring excellence in every part of America. (Applause.)

Fourth, we must empower parents, with more information and more choices. In too many communities, it's easier to get information on the quality of the local restaurants than on the quality of the local schools. Every school district should issue report cards on every school. And parents should be given more choices in selecting their public schools. (Applause.)

When I became President, there was just one independent public charter school in all America. With our support, on a bipartisan basis, today there are 1,100. My budget assures that early in the next century, there will be 3,000. (Applause.)

Fifth, to assure that our classrooms are truly places of learning, and to respond to what teachers have been asking us to do for years, we should say that all states and school districts must both adopt and implement sensible discipline policies. (Applause.)

Now, let's do one more thing for our children. Today, too many of our schools are so old they're falling apart, or so over-crowded students are learning in trailers. Last fall, Congress missed the opportunity to change that. This year, with 53 million children in our schools, Congress must not miss that opportunity again. I ask you to help our communities build or modernize 5,000 schools. (Applause.)

If we do these things -- end social promotion; turn around failing schools; build modern ones; support qualified teachers; promote innovation, competition and discipline -- then we will begin to meet our generation's historic responsibility to create 21st century schools. (Applause.)

Now, we also have to do more to support the millions of parents who give their all every day at home and at work. The most basic tool of all is a decent income. So let's raise the minimum wage by a dollar an hour over the next two years. (Applause.) And let's make sure that women and men get equal pay for equal work by strengthening enforcement of equal pay laws. (Applause.)

That was encouraging, you know. (Laughter.) There was more balance on the seats. I like that. Let's give them a hand. That's great. (Applause.)

Working parents also need quality child care. (Applause.) So, again this year, I ask Congress to support our plan for tax credits and subsidies for working families, for improved safety and quality, for expanded after-school programs. And our plan also includes a new tax credit for stay-at-home parents, too. They need support, as well. (Applause.)

Parents should never have to worry about choosing between their children and their work. Now, the Family and Medical Leave Act -- the very first bill I signed into law -- has now, since 1993, helped millions and millions of Americans to care for a newborn baby or an ailing relative without risking their

jobs. I think it's time, with all the evidence that it has been so little burdensome to employers, to extend Family Leave to 10 million more Americans working for smaller companies. And I hope you will support it. (Applause.)

Finally on the matter of work, parents should never have to face discrimination in the workplace. So I want to ask Congress to prohibit companies from refusing to hire or promote workers simply because they have children. That is not right. (Applause.)

America's families deserve the world's best medical care. Thanks to bipartisan federal support for medical research, we are now on the verge of new treatments to prevent or delay diseases from Parkinson's to Alzheimer's, to arthritis to cancer. But as we continue our advances in medical science, we can't let our medical system lag behind. Managed care has literally transformed medicine in America -- driving down costs, but threatening to drive down quality as well.

I think we ought to say to every American: You should have the right to know all your medical options -- not just the cheapest. If you need a specialist, you should have the right to see one. You have a right to the nearest emergency care if you're in an accident. These are things that we ought to say. And I think we ought to say, you should have a right to keep your doctor during a period of treatment, whether it's a pregnancy or a chemotherapy treatment, or anything else. I believe this. (Held)

Now, I've ordered these rights to be extended to the 85 million Americans served by Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health programs. But only Congress can pass a patients' bill of rights for all Americans. (Applause.) Now, last year, Congress missed that opportunity and we must not miss that opportunity again. For the sake of our families, I ask us to join together across party lines and pass a strong, enforceable patients' bill of rights. (Applause.)

As more of our medical records are stored electronically, the threats to all our privacy increase. Because Congress has given me the authority to act if it does not do so by August, one way or another, we can all say to the American people, we will protect the privacy of medical records and we will do it this year. (Applause.)

Now, two years ago, the Congress extended health coverage to up to five million children. Now, we should go beyond that. We should make it easier for small businesses to offer health insurance. We should give people between the ages of 55 and 65 who lose their health insurance the chance to buy into Medicare. And we should continue to ensure access to family planning.

No one should have to choose between keeping health care and taking a job. And, therefore, I especially ask you tonight to join hands to pass the landmark bipartisan legislation -- proposed by Senators Kennedy and Jeffords, Roth and Moynihan -- to allow people with disabilities to keep their health insurance when they go to work. (Applause.)

We need to enable our public hospitals, our community, our university health centers to provide basic, affordable care for all the millions of working families who don't have any insurance. They do a lot of that today, but much more can be done. And my balanced budget makes a good down payment toward that goal. I hope you will think about them and support that provision.

Let me say we must step up our efforts to treat and prevent mental illness. No American should ever be afraid -- ever -- to address this disease. This year, we will host a White House Conference on Mental Health. With sensitivity, commitment and passion, Tipper Gore is leading our efforts here, and I'd like to thank her for what she's done. Thank you. Thank you. (Applause.)

As everyone knows, our children are targets of a massive media campaign to hook them on cigarettes. Now, I ask this Congress to resist the tobacco lobby, to reaffirm the FDA's authority to protect our children from tobacco, and to hold tobacco companies accountable while protecting tobacco farmers.

Smoking has cost taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars under Medicare and other programs. You know, the states have been right about this -- taxpayers shouldn't pay for the cost of lung cancer,

emphysema and other smoking-related illnesses -- the tobacco companies should. So tonight I announce that the Justice Department is preparing a litigation plan to take the tobacco companies to court -- and with the funds we recover, to strengthen Medicare. (Applause.)

Now, if we act in these areas -- minimum wage, family leave, child care, health care, the safety of our children -- then we will begin to meet our generation's historic responsibility to strengthen our families for the 21st century.

Today, America is the most dynamic, competitive, job-creating economy in history. But we can do even better -- in building a 21st century economy that embraces all Americans.

Today's income gap is largely a skills gap. Last year, the Congress passed a law enabling workers to get a skills grant to choose the training they need. And I applaud all of you here who were part of that. This year, I recommend a five-year commitment in the new system so that we can provide, over the next five years, appropriate training opportunities for all Americans who lose their jobs, and expand rapid response teams to help all towns which have been really hurt when businesses close. I hope you will support this. (Applause.)

Also, I ask your support for a dramatic increase in federal support for adult literacy, to mount a national campaign aimed at helping the millions and millions of working people who still read at less than a 5th grade level. We need to do this. (Applause.)

Here's some good news: In the past six years, we have cut the welfare rolls nearly in half. (Applause.) Two years ago, from this podium, I asked five companies to lead a national effort to hire people off welfare. Tonight, our Welfare to Work Partnership includes 10,000 companies who have hired hundreds of thousands of people. And our balanced budget will help another 200,000 people move to the dignity and pride of work. I hope you will support it. (Applause.)

We must do more to bring the spark of private enterprise to every corner of America -- to build a bridge from Wall Street to Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta, to our Native American communities -- with more support for community development banks, for empowerment zones, for 100,000 more vouchers for affordable housing. And I ask Congress to support our bold new plan to help businesses raise up to \$15 billion in private sector capital to bring jobs and opportunities to our inner cities and rural areas -- with tax credits, loan guarantees, including the new American Private Investment Company, modeled on the Overseas Private Investment Company. (Applause.)

For years and years and years, we've had this OPIC, this Overseas Private Investment Corporation, because we knew we had untapped markets overseas. But our greatest untapped markets are not overseas -- they are right here at home. And we should go after them. (Applause.)

We must work hard to help bring prosperity back to the family farm. (Applause.) As this Congress knows very well, dropping prices and the loss of foreign markets have devastated too many family farms. Last year, the Congress provided substantial assistance to help stave off a disaster in American agriculture. And I am ready to work with lawmakers of both parties to create a farm safety net that will include crop insurance reform and farm income assistance. I ask you to join with me and do this. This should not be a political issue. Everyone knows what an economic problem is going on out there in rural America today, and we need an appropriate means to address it. (Applause.)

We must strengthen our lead in technology. It was government investment that led to the creation of the Internet. I propose a 28-percent increase in long-term computing research.

We also must be ready for the 21st century from its very first moment, by solving the so-called Y2K computer problem. (Applause.)

We had one member of Congress stand up and applaud. (Laughter.) And we may have about that ratio out there applauding at home, in front of their television sets. But remember, this is a big, big problem. And we've been working hard on it. Already, we've made sure that the Social Security checks will come

on time.(Applause.) But I want all the folks at home listening to this toknow that we need every state and local government, every business,large and small, to work with us to make sure that this Y2K computerbug will be remembered as the last headache of the 20th century, notthe first crisis of the 21st.(Applause.)

For our own prosperity, we must support economic growthabroad. You know, until recently, a third of our economic growthcame from exports. But over the past year and a half, financialturmoil overseas has put that growth at risk. Today, much of theworld is in recession, with Asia hit especially hard. This is themost serious financial crisis in half a century. To meet it, theUnited States and other nations have reduced interest rates andstrengthened the International Monetary Fund. And while the turmoilis not over, we have worked very hard with other nations to containit.

At the same time, we have to continue to work on thelong-term project, building a global financial system for the 21stcentury that promotes prosperity and tames the cycle of boom and bustthat has engulfed so much of Asia. This June I will meet with otherworld leaders to advance this historic purpose. And I ask all of you to support our endeavors.

I also ask you to support creating a freer and fairertrading system for 21st century America. (Applause.)

I'd like to say something really serious to everyone inthis chamber in both parties. I think trade has divided us, anddivided Americans outside this chamber, for too long. Somehow wehave to find a common ground on which business and workers andenvironmentalists and farmers and government can stand together.I believe these are the things we ought to all agree on. So let metry.

First, we ought to tear down barriers, open markets, andexpand trade. But at the same time, we must ensure that ordinarycitizens in all countries actually benefit from trade -- (applause)-- a trade that promotes the dignity of work, and the rights ofworkers, and protects the environment. We must insist thatinternational trade organizations be more open to public scrutiny,instead of mysterious, secret things subject to wild criticism.

When you come right down to it, now that the worldeconomy is becoming more and more integrated, we have to do in theworld what we spent the better part of this century doing here athome. We have got to put a human face on the global economy.(Applause.)

We must enforce our trade laws when imports unlawfullyflood our nation. (Applause.) I have already informed thegovernment of Japan that if that nation's sudden surge of steelimports into our country is not reversed, America will respond.(Applause.)

We must help all manufacturers hit hard by the presentcrisis with loan guarantees and other incentives to increase Americanexports by nearly \$2 billion. I'd like to believe we can achieve anew consensus on trade, based on these principles. And I ask theCongress again to join me in this common approach and to give thePresident the trade authority long used -- and now overdue andnecessary -- to advance our prosperity in the 21st century.(Applause.)

Tonight, I issue a call to the nations of the world tojoin the United States in a new round of global trade negotiations toexpand exports of services, manufacturers and farm products. TonightI say we will work with the International Labor Organization on a newinitiative to raise labor standards around the world. And this year,we will lead the international community to conclude a treaty to banabusive child labor everywhere in the world. (Applause.)

If we do these things -- invest in our people, ourcommunities, our technology, and lead in the global economy -- thenwe will begin to meet our historic responsibility to build a 21stcentury prosperity for America.

You know, no nation in history has had the opportunityand the responsibility we now have to shape a world that is morepeaceful, more secure, more free. All Americans can be proud thatour leadership helped to bring peace in Northern Ireland. AllAmericans can be proud that our leadership has put Bosnia

on the path to peace. And with our NATO allies, we are pressing the Serbian government to stop its brutal repression in Kosovo -- (applause) -- to bring those responsible to justice, and to give the people of Kosovo the self-government they deserve.

All Americans can be proud that our leadership renewed hope for lasting peace in the Middle East. Some of you were with me last December as we watched the Palestinian National Council completely renounce its call for the destruction of Israel. Now I ask Congress to provide resources so that all parties can implement the Wye Agreement -- to protect Israel's security, to stimulate the Palestinian economy, to support our friends in Jordan. We must not, we dare not, let them down. I hope you will help. (Applause.)

As we work for peace, we must also meet threats to our nation's security -- including increased dangers from outlaw nations and terrorism. We will defend our security wherever we are threatened, as we did this summer when we struck at Osama bin Laden's network of terror. The bombing of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania reminds us again of the risks faced every day by those who represent America to the world. So let's give them the support they need, the safest possible workplaces, and the resources they must have so America can continue to lead. (Applause.)

We must work to keep terrorists from disrupting computer networks. We must work to prepare local communities for biological and chemical emergencies, to support research into vaccines and treatments.

We must increase our efforts to restrain the spread of nuclear weapons and missiles, from Korea to India and Pakistan. We must expand our work with Russia, Ukraine, and the other former Soviet nations to safeguard nuclear materials and technology so they never fall into the wrong hands. Our balanced budget will increase funding for these critical efforts by almost two-thirds over the next five years.

With Russia, we must continue to reduce our nuclear arsenals. The START II treaty and the framework we have already agreed to for START III could cut them by 80 percent from their Cold War height.

It's been two years since I signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. If we don't do the right thing, other nations won't either. I ask the Senate to take this vital step: Approve the treaty now, to make it harder for other nations to develop nuclear arms, and to make sure we can end nuclear testing forever. (Applause.)

For nearly a decade, Iraq has defied its obligations to destroy its weapons of terror and the missiles to deliver them. America will continue to contain Saddam -- and we will work for the day when Iraq has a government worthy of its people. (Applause.)

Now, last month, in our action over Iraq, our troops were superb. Their mission was so flawlessly executed that we risk taking for granted the bravery and the skill it required. Captain Jeff Taliaferro, a 10-year veteran of the Air Force, flew a B-1B bomber over Iraq as we attacked Saddam's war machine. He's here with us tonight. I'd like to ask you to honor him and all the 33,000 men and women of Operation Desert Fox.

Captain Taliaferro. (Applause.)

It is time to reverse the decline in defense spending that began in 1985. (Applause.) Since April, together we have added nearly \$6 billion to maintain our military readiness. My balanced budget calls for a sustained increase over the next six years for readiness, for modernization, and for pay and benefits for our troops and their families. (Applause.)

We are the heirs of a legacy of bravery represented in every community in America by millions of our veterans. America's defenders today still stand ready at a moment's notice to go where comforts are few and dangers are many, to do what needs to be done as no one else can. They always come through for America. We must come through for them. (Applause.)

The new century demands new partnerships for peace and security. The United Nations plays a crucial role, with allies sharing burdens America might otherwise bear alone. America needs a strong and

effective U.N. I want to work with this new Congress to pay our dues and our debts. (Applause.)

We must continue to support security and stability in Europe and Asia -- expanding NATO and defining its new missions; maintaining our alliance with Japan, with Korea, without our other Asian allies; and engaging China.

In China, last year, I said to the leaders and the people what I'd like to say again tonight: Stability can no longer be bought at the expense of liberty. (Applause.) But I'd also like to say again to the American people: It's important not to isolate China. The more we bring China into the world, the more the world will bring change and freedom to China. (Applause.)

Last spring, with some of you, I traveled to Africa, where I saw democracy and reform rising, but still held back by violence and disease. We must fortify African democracy and peace by launching Radio Democracy for Africa, supporting the transition to democracy now beginning to take place in Nigeria, and passing the African Trade and Development Act. (Applause.)

We must continue to deepen our ties to the Americas and the Caribbean; our common work to educate children, fight drugs, strengthen democracy and increase trade. In this hemisphere, every government but one is freely chosen by its people. We are determined that Cuba, too, will know the blessings of liberty. (Applause.)

The American people have opened their hearts and their arms to our Central American and Caribbean neighbors who have been so devastated by the recent hurricanes. Working with Congress, I am committed to help them rebuild. When the First Lady and Tipper Gore visited the region, they saw thousands of our troops and thousands of American volunteers. In the Dominican Republic, Hillary helped to dedicate a hospital that had been rebuilt by Dominicans and Americans, working side-by-side. With her was someone else who has been very important to the relief efforts.

You know, sports records are made and, sooner or later, they're broken. But making other people's lives better, and showing our children the true meaning of brotherhood -- that lasts forever. So, for far more than baseball, Sammy Sosa, you're a hero in two countries tonight. Thank you. (Applause.)

So I say to all of you, if we do these things -- if we pursue peace, fight terrorism, increase our strength, renew our alliances -- we will begin to meet our generation's historic responsibility to build a stronger 21st century America in a freer, more peaceful world.

As the world has changed, so have our own communities. We must make them safer, more livable and more united. This year, we will reach our goal of 100,000 community police officers -- ahead of schedule and under budget. (Applause.) The Brady Bill has stopped a quarter million felons, fugitives and stalkers from buying handguns. And, now, the murder rate is the lowest in 30 years and the crime rate has dropped for six straight years. (Applause.)

Tonight, I propose a 21st century crime bill to deploy the latest technologies and tactics to make our communities even safer. Our balanced budget will help put up to 50,000 more police on the street, in the areas hardest hit by crime -- and then to equip them with new tools, from crime-mapping computers to digital mugshots.

We must break the deadly cycle of drugs and crime. Our budget expands support for drug testing and treatment, saying to prisoners: If you stay on drugs, you have to stay behind bars. And to those on parole: If you want to keep your freedom, you must stay free of drugs. (Applause.)

I ask Congress to restore the five-day waiting period for buying a handgun -- (applause) -- and extend the Brady Bill to prevent juveniles who commit violent crimes from buying a gun. (Applause.)

We must do more to keep our schools the safest places in our communities. Last year, every American was horrified and heartbroken by the tragic killings in Jonesboro, Paducah, Pearl, Edinboro, Springfield. We were deeply moved by the courageous parents now working to keep guns out of the hands of children

and to make other efforts so that other parents don't have to live through their loss.

After she lost her daughter, Suzann Wilson of Jonesboro, Arkansas, came here to the White House with a powerful plea. She said, "Please, please, for the sake of your children, lock up your gun. Don't let what happened in Jonesboro happen in your town." It's a message she is passionately advocating every day.

Suzann is here with us tonight, with the First Lady. I'd like to thank her for her courage and her commitment. Thank you. (Applause.)

In memory of all the children who lost their lives to school violence, I ask you to strengthen the Safe and Drug-Free School Act, to pass legislation to require child trigger locks, to do everything possible to keep our children safe. (Applause.)

A century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt defined our "great, central task" as "leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us." Today, we're restoring the Florida Everglades, saving Yellowstone, preserving the red rock canyons of Utah, protecting California's redwoods and our precious coasts. But our most fateful new challenge is the threat of global warming. 1998 was the warmest year ever recorded. Last year's heat waves, floods and storms are but a hint of what future generations may endure if we do not act now.

Tonight I propose a new clean air fund to help communities reduce greenhouse and other pollution, and tax incentives and investments to spur clean energy technology. And I want to work with members of Congress in both parties to reward companies that take early, voluntary action to reduce greenhouse gases. (Applause.)

All our communities face a preservation challenge, as they grow and green space shrinks. Seven thousand acres of farmland and open space are lost every day. In response, I propose two major initiatives: First, a \$1-billion Livability Agenda to help communities save open space, ease traffic congestion, and grow in ways that enhance every citizen's quality of life. (Applause.) And second, a \$1-billion Lands Legacy Initiative to preserve places of natural beauty all across America -- from the most remote wilderness to the nearest city park. (Applause.)

These are truly landmark initiatives, which could not have been developed without the visionary leadership of the Vice President, and I want to thank him very much for his commitment here. (Applause.)

Now, to get the most out of your community, you have to give something back. That's why we created AmeriCorps -- our national service program that gives today's generation a chance to serve their communities and earn money for college.

So far, in just four years, 100,000 young Americans have built low-income homes with Habitat for Humanity, helped to tutor children with churches, worked with FEMA to ease the burden of natural disasters, and performed countless other acts of service that have made America better. I ask Congress to give more young Americans the chance to follow their lead and serve America in AmeriCorps. (Applause.)

Now, we must work to renew our national community as well for the 21st century. Last year the House passed the bipartisan campaign finance reform legislation sponsored by Representatives Shays and Meehan and Senators McCain and Feingold. But a partisan minority in the Senate blocked reform. So I'd like to say to the House: Pass it again, quickly. (Applause.) And I'd like to say to the Senate: I hope you will say yes to a stronger American democracy in the year 2000. (Applause.)

Since 1997, our Initiative on Race has sought to bridge the divides between and among our people. In its report last fall, the Initiative's Advisory Board found that Americans really do want to bring our people together across racial lines.

We know it's been a long journey. For some, it goes back to before the beginning of our Republic; for

others, back since the Civil War; for others, throughout the 20th century. But for most of us alive today, in a very real sense, this journey began 43 years ago, when a woman named Rosa Parks sat down on a bus in Alabama, and wouldn't get up. She's sitting down with the First Lady tonight, and she may get up or not, as she chooses. We thank her. (Applause.) Thank you, Rosa. (Applause.)

We know that our continuing racial problems are aggravated, as the Presidential Initiative said, by opportunity gaps. The initiative I've outlined tonight will help to close them. But we know that the discrimination gap has not been fully closed either. Discrimination or violence because of race or religion, ancestry or gender, disability or sexual orientation, is wrong, and it ought to be illegal. Therefore, I ask Congress to make the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the Hate Crimes Prevention Act the law of the land. (Applause.)

Now, since every person in America counts, every American ought to be counted. We need a census that uses modern scientific methods to do that. (Applause.)

Our new immigrants must be part of our One America. After all, they're revitalizing our cities, they're energizing our culture, they're building up our economy. We have a responsibility to make them welcome here; and they have a responsibility to enter the mainstream of American life. That means learning English and learning about our democratic system of government. There are now long waiting lines of immigrants that are trying to do just that. Therefore, our budget significantly expands our efforts to help them meet their responsibility. I hope you will support it. (Applause.)

Whether our ancestors came here on the Mayflower, on slave ships, whether they came to Ellis Island or LAX in Los Angeles, whether they came yesterday or walked this land a thousand years ago-- our great challenge for the 21st century is to find a way to be One America. We can meet all the other challenges if we can go forward as One America.

You know, barely more than 300 days from now, we will cross that bridge into the new millennium. This is a moment, as the First Lady has said, "to honor the past and imagine the future."

I'd like to take just a minute to honor her. For leading our Millennium Project, for all she's done for our children, for all she has done in her historic role to serve our nation and our best ideals at home and abroad, I honor her. (Applause.)

Last year, I called on Congress and every citizen to mark the millennium by saving America's treasures. Hillary has traveled all across the country to inspire recognition and support for saving places like Thomas Edison's Invention Factory or Harriet Tubman's home. Now we have to preserve our treasures in every community. And tonight, before I close, I want to invite every town, every city, every community to become nationally recognized "millennium community," by launching projects that save our history, promote our arts and humanities, prepare our children for the 21st century.

Already, the response has been remarkable. And I want to say a special word of thanks to our private sector partners and to members in Congress of both parties for their support. Just one example: Because of you, the Star-Spangled Banner will be preserved for the ages. In ways large and small, as we look to the millennium we are keeping alive what George Washington called "the sacred fire of liberty."

Six years ago, I came to office in a time of doubt for America, with our economy troubled, our deficit high, our people divided. Some even wondered whether our best days were behind us. But across this country, in a thousand neighborhoods, I have seen -- even amidst the pain and uncertainty of recession -- the real heart and character of America. I knew then that we Americans could renew this country.

Tonight, as I deliver the last State of the Union address of the 20th century, no one anywhere in the world can doubt the enduring resolve and boundless capacity of the American people to work toward that "more perfect union" of our founders' dream.

We're now at the end of a century when generation after generation of Americans answered the call to greatness, overcoming Depression, lifting up the dispossessed, bringing down barriers to racial prejudice,

building the largest middle class in history, winning two world wars and the "long twilight struggle" of the Cold War. We must all be profoundly grateful for the magnificent achievement of our forbearers in this century.

Yet, perhaps, in the daily press of events, in the clash of controversy, we don't see our own time for what it truly is -- a new dawn for America.

A hundred years from tonight, another American President will stand in this place and report on the State of the Union. He -- or she -- (applause) -- he or she will look back on a 21st century shaped in so many ways by the decisions we make here and now. So let it be said of us then that we were thinking not only of our time, but of their time; that we reached as high as our ideals; that we put aside our divisions and found a new hour of healing and hopefulness; that we joined together to serve and strengthen the land we love.

My fellow Americans, this is our moment. Let us lift our eyes as one nation, and from the mountaintop of this American Century, look ahead to the next one -- asking God's blessing on our endeavors and on our beloved country.

Thank you and good evening.

What's New - January 1999

Lands Legacy Initiative

Health Care Event

New Drug Prevention Initiative

Budget Surplus for 1999

Pope John Paul II

Social Security and Medicare

New Jobs Initiative

Strengthen Our Nation's Cities

New Welfare-To-Work Initiatives

Americans With Disabilities

The 21st Century Policing Initiative

AmeriCorps Service Event Remarks

After-School Program Proposal

1999 State Of The Union Transcript

The Detroit Economic Club

The People of Buffalo

Argentinian President Menem

[New Education Initiatives](#)

[Keeping America Secure for the 21st Century](#)

[Answer of President William Jefferson Clinton To Articles Of Impeachment](#)

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State of the Union Address

Date: [

Policy Proposals:]

Jan. 1998

• Education :

- ↳ Class-size reduction initiative (Grades 1-3 should have no more than 18 students)
- ↳ School construction tax cut for communities
- ↳ Increase accountability to end social promotion
- ↳ GI Bill for Workers

• Health Care :

- ↳ Health Care Consumer Bill of Rights
- ↳ Expand medicare eligibility for retirees, spouses, and disabled workers
- ↳ Raise price of cigarettes

• Child Care :

- ↳ Help families pay for care of 1 mil. children
- ↳ Scholarships & background checks for child care workers
- ↳ Tax credits for businesses that provide child care

• Crime :

- ↳ Pass a juvenile crime bill
- ↳ Support after-school programs
- ↳ Speedier confirmation of federal judges

• Campaign finance reform

- ↳ pass McCain-Feingold
- ↳ Free or reduced-fee television rates for candidates

• Community building

- ↳ Triple # of empowerment zones
- ↳ Tax cuts for construction of low-income housing
- ↳ environmental protection in cities & Clean Water Initiative
- ↳ National Initiative on race

State of The Union Address - January 27, 1998

**THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary**

For Immediate Release

January 27, 1998

**STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS
BY THE PRESIDENT**

Hall of the House
United States Capitol

[Listen to Address with Real Audio player](#) || [Watch the Address with Real Video player](#)

9:12 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, members of the 105th Congress, distinguished guests, my fellow Americans:

Since the last time we met in this chamber, America has lost two patriots and fine public servants. Though they sat on opposite sides of the aisle, Representatives Walter Capps and Sonny Bono shared a deep love for this House and an unshakable commitment to improving the lives of all our people. In the past few weeks they've both been eulogized. Tonight, I think we should begin by sending a message to their families and their friends that we celebrate their lives and give thanks for their service to our nation. (Applause.)

For 209 years it has been the President's duty to report to you on the state of the Union. Because of the hard work and high purpose of the American people, these are good times for America. We have more than 14 million new jobs; the lowest unemployment in 24 years; the lowest core inflation in 30 years; incomes are rising; and we have the highest homeownership in history. Crime has dropped for a record five years in a row. And the welfare rolls are at their lowest levels in 27 years. Our leadership in the world is unrivaled. Ladies and gentlemen, the state of our Union is strong. (Applause.)

With barely 700 days left in the 20th century, this is not a time to rest. It is a time to build, to build the America within reach: an America where everybody has a chance to get ahead with hard work; where every citizen can live in a safe community; where families are strong, schools are good and all young people can go to college; an America where scientists find cures for diseases from diabetes to Alzheimer's to AIDS; an America where every child can stretch a hand across a keyboard and reach every book ever written, every painting ever painted, every symphony ever composed; where government provides opportunity and citizens honor the responsibility to give something back to their communities; an America which leads the world to new heights of peace and prosperity.

This is the America we have begun to build; this is the America we can leave to our children -- if we join together to finish the work at hand. Let us strengthen our nation for the 21st century. (Applause.)

Rarely have Americans lived through so much change, in so many ways, in so short a time.

Quietly, but with gathering force, the ground has shifted beneath our feet as we have moved into an Information Age, a global economy, a truly new world.

For five years now we have met the challenge of these changes as Americans have at every turning point -- by renewing the very idea of America: widening the circle of opportunity, deepening the meaning of our freedom, forging a more perfect union.

We shaped a new kind of government for the Information Age. I thank the Vice President for his leadership and the Congress for its support in building a government that is leaner, more flexible, a catalyst for new ideas -- and most of all, a government that gives the American people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. (Applause.)

We have moved past the sterile debate between those who say government is the enemy and those who say government is the answer. My fellow Americans, we have found a third way. We have the smallest government in 35 years, but a more progressive one. We have a smaller government, but a stronger nation. (Applause.) We are moving steadily toward an even stronger America in the 21st century: an economy that offers opportunity, a society rooted in responsibility and a nation that lives as a community.

First, Americans in this chamber and across our nation have pursued a new strategy for prosperity: fiscal discipline to cut interest rates and spur growth; investments in education and skills, in science and technology and transportation, to prepare our people for the new economy; new markets for American products and American workers.

When I took office, the deficit for 1998 was projected to be \$357 billion, and heading higher. This year, our deficit is projected to be \$10 billion, and heading lower. (Applause.) For three decades, six Presidents have come before you to warn of the damage deficits pose to our nation. Tonight, I come before you to announce that the federal deficit -- once so incomprehensibly large that it had 11 zeroes -- will be, simply, zero. (Applause.) I will submit to Congress for 1999 the first balanced budget in 30 years. (Applause.) And if we hold fast to fiscal discipline, we may balance the budget this year -- four years ahead of schedule. (Applause.)

You can all be proud of that, because turning a sea of red ink into black is no miracle. It is the product of hard work by the American people, and of two visionary actions in Congress -- the courageous vote in 1993 that led to a cut in the deficit of 90 percent -- (applause) -- and the truly historic bipartisan balanced budget agreement passed by this Congress. (Applause.) Here's the really good news: If we maintain our resolve, we will produce balanced budgets as far as the eye can see.

We must not go back to unwise spending or untargeted tax cuts that risk reopening the deficit. (Applause.) Last year, together we enacted targeted tax cuts so that the typical middle class family will now have the lowest tax rates in 20 years. (Applause.) My plan to balance the budget next year includes both new investments and new tax cuts targeted to the needs of working families: for education, for child care, for the environment.

But whether the issue is tax cuts or spending, I ask all of you to meet this test: Approve only those priorities that can actually be accomplished without adding a dime to the deficit. (Applause.)

Now, if we balance the budget for next year, it is projected that we'll then have a sizeable surplus in the years that immediately follow. What should we do with this projected surplus? I have a simple four-word answer: Save Social Security first. (Applause.) Thank you.

Tonight, I propose that we reserve 100 percent of the surplus -- that's every penny of any surplus -- until we have taken all the necessary measures to strengthen the Social Security

system for the 21st century. (Applause.) Let us say to all Americans watching tonight -- whether you're 70 or 50, or whether you just started paying into the system -- Social Security will be there when you need it. (Applause.) Let us make this commitment: Social Security first. Let's do that together. (Applause.)

I also want to say that all the American people who are watching us tonight should be invited to join in this discussion, in facing these issues squarely, and forming a true consensus on how we should proceed. We'll start by conducting nonpartisan forums in every region of the country -- and I hope that lawmakers of both parties will participate. We'll hold a White House Conference on Social Security in December. And one year from now I will convene the leaders of Congress to craft historic, bipartisan legislation to achieve a landmark for our generation -- a Social Security system that is strong in the 21st century. (Applause.) Thank you.

In an economy that honors opportunity, all Americans must be able to reap the rewards of prosperity. Because these times are good, we can afford to take one simple, sensible step to help millions of workers struggling to provide for their families: We should raise the minimum wage. (Applause.)

The Information Age is, first and foremost, an education age, in which education must start at birth and continue throughout a lifetime. Last year, from this podium, I said that education has to be our highest priority. I laid out a 10-point plan to move us forward and urged all of us to let politics stop at the schoolhouse door. Since then, this Congress, across party lines, and the American people have responded, in the most important year for education in a generation -- expanding public school choice, opening the way to 3,000 new charter schools, working to connect every classroom in the country to the Information Superhighway, committing to expand Head Start to a million children, launching America Reads, sending literally thousands of college students into our elementary schools to make sure all our 8-year-olds can read.

Last year I proposed, and you passed, 220,000 new Pell Grant scholarships for deserving students. (Applause.) Student loans, already less expensive and easier to repay, now you get to deduct the interest. (Applause.) Families all over America now can put their savings into new tax-free education IRAs. And this year, for the first two years of college, families will get a \$1,500 tax credit -- a HOPE Scholarship that will cover the cost of most community college tuition. And for junior and senior year, graduate school, and job training, there is a lifetime learning credit. You did that and you should be very proud of it. (Applause.)

And because of these actions, I have something to say to every family listening to us tonight: Your children can go on to college. If you know a child from a poor family, tell her not to give up -- she can go on to college. If you know a young couple struggling with bills, worried they won't be able to send their children to college, tell them not to give up -- their children can go on to college. If you know somebody who's caught in a dead-end job and afraid he can't afford the classes necessary to get better jobs for the rest of his life, tell him not to give up -- he can go on to college. Because of the things that have been done, we can make college as universal in the 21st century as high school is today. And, my friends, that will change the face and future of America. (Applause.)

We have opened wide the doors of the world's best system of higher education. Now we must make our public elementary and secondary schools the world's best as well -- (applause) -- by raising standards, raising expectations, and raising accountability.

Thanks to the actions of this Congress last year, we will soon have, for the very first time, a voluntary national test based on national standards in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. Parents have a right to know whether their children are mastering the basics. And every parent already knows the key: good teachers and small classes.

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Tonight, I propose the first ever national effort to reduce class size in the early grades. (Applause.) Thank you.

My balanced budget will help to hire 100,000 new teachers who have passed a state competency test. Now, with these teachers -- listen -- with these teachers, we will actually be able to reduce class size in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades to an average of 18 students a class, all across America. (Applause.)

If I've got the math right, more teachers teaching smaller classes requires more classrooms. So I also propose a school construction tax cut to help communities modernize or build 5,000 schools. (Applause.)

We must also demand greater accountability. (Applause.) When we promote a child from grade to grade who hasn't mastered the work, we don't do that child any favors. It is time to end social promotion in America's schools. (Applause.)

Last year, in Chicago, they made that decision -- not to hold our children back, but to lift them up. Chicago stopped social promotion, and started mandatory summer school, to help students who are behind to catch up. I propose -- (applause) -- I propose to help other communities follow Chicago's lead. Let's say to them: Stop promoting children who don't learn, and we will give you the tools to make sure they do. (Applause.)

I also ask this Congress to support our efforts to enlist colleges and universities to reach out to disadvantaged children, starting in the 6th grade, so that they can get the guidance and hope they need so they can know that they, too, will be able to go on to college. (Applause.)

As we enter the 21st century, the global economy requires us to seek opportunity not just at home, but in all the markets of the world. We must shape this global economy, not shrink from it. In the last five years, we have led the way in opening new markets, with 240 trade agreements that remove foreign barriers to products bearing the proud stamp "Made in the USA." Today, record high exports account for fully one-third of our economic growth. I want to keep them going, because that's the way to keep America growing and to advance a safer, more stable world. (Applause.)

All of you know whatever your views are that I think this a great opportunity for America. I know there is opposition to more comprehensive trade agreements. I have listened carefully and I believe that the opposition is rooted in two fears: first, that our trading partners will have lower environmental and labor standards which will give them an unfair advantage in our market and do their own people no favors, even if there's more business; and, second, that if we have more trade, more of our workers will lose their jobs and have to start over. I think we should seek to advance worker and environmental standards around the world. (Applause.) I have made it abundantly clear that it should be a part of our trade agenda. But we cannot influence other countries' decisions if we send them a message that we're backing away from trade with them.

This year, I will send legislation to Congress, and ask other nations to join us, to fight the most intolerable labor practice of all -- abusive child labor. (Applause.) We should also offer help and hope to those Americans temporarily left behind by the global marketplace or by the march of technology, which may have nothing to do with trade. That's why we have more than doubled funding for training dislocated workers since 1993 -- and if my new budget is adopted, we will triple funding. That's why we must do more, and more quickly, to help workers who lose their jobs for whatever reason.

You know, we help communities in a special way when their military base closes. We ought to help them in the same way if their factory closes. (Applause.) Again, I ask the Congress to continue its bipartisan work to consolidate the tangle of training programs we have today into one single G.I. Bill for Workers, a simple skills grant so people can, on their own,

move quickly to new jobs, to higher incomes and brighter futures. (Applause.)

We all know in every way in life change is not always easy, but we have to decide whether we're going to try to hold it back and hide from it or reap its benefits. And remember the big picture here: While we've been entering into hundreds of new trade agreements, we've been creating millions of new jobs.

So this year we will forge new partnerships with Latin America, Asia, and Europe. And we should pass the new African Trade Act -- it has bipartisan support. (Applause.) I will also renew my request for the fast track negotiating authority necessary to open more new markets, create more new jobs, which every President has had for two decades. (Applause.)

You know, whether we like it or not, in ways that are mostly positive, the world's economies are more and more interconnected and interdependent. Today, an economic crisis anywhere can affect economies everywhere. Recent months have brought serious financial problems to Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, and beyond.

Now, why should Americans be concerned about this? First, these countries are our customers. If they sink into recession, they won't be able to buy the goods we'd like to sell them. Second, they're also our competitors. So if their currencies lose their value and go down, then the price of their goods will drop, flooding our market and others with much cheaper goods, which makes it a lot tougher for our people to compete. And, finally, they are our strategic partners. Their stability bolsters our security. (Applause.)

The American economy remains sound and strong, and I want to keep it that way. But because the turmoil in Asia will have an impact on all the world's economies, including ours, making that negative impact as small as possible is the right thing to do for America -- and the right thing to do for a safer world. (Applause.)

Our policy is clear: No nation can recover if it does not reform itself. But when nations are willing to undertake serious economic reform, we should help them do it. So I call on Congress to renew America's commitment to the International Monetary Fund. (Applause.) And I think we should say to all the people we're trying to represent here that preparing for a far-off storm that may reach our shores is far wiser than ignoring the thunder until the clouds are just overhead. (Applause.)

A strong nation rests on the rock of responsibility. (Applause.) A society rooted in responsibility must first promote the value of work, not welfare. We can be proud that after decades of finger-pointing and failure, together we ended the old welfare system. And we're now we replacing welfare checks with paychecks. (Applause.)

Last year, after a record four-year decline in welfare rolls, I challenged our nation to move 2 million more Americans off welfare by the year 2000. I'm pleased to report we have also met that goal, two full years ahead of schedule. (Applause.)

*Accomplish
welfare
reform*

This is a grand achievement, the sum of many acts of individual courage, persistence and hope. For 13 years, Elaine Kinslow of Indianapolis, Indiana, was on and off welfare. Today, she's a dispatcher with the a van company. She's saved enough money to move her family into a good neighborhood, and she's helping other welfare recipients go to work. Elaine Kinslow and all those like her are the real heroes of the welfare revolution. There are millions like her all across America. And I'm happy she could join the First Lady tonight. Elaine, we're very proud of you. Please stand up. (Applause.)

We still have a lot more to do, all of us, to make welfare reform a success -- providing child care, helping families move closer to available jobs, challenging more companies to join our welfare-to-work partnership, increasing child support collections from deadbeat parents who have a duty to support their own children. I also want to thank Congress for restoring some

of the benefits to immigrants who are here legally and working hard -- and I hope you will finish that job this year. (Applause.)

We have to make it possible for all hard-working families to meet their most important responsibilities. Two years ago, we helped guarantee that Americans can keep their health insurance when they change jobs. Last year, we extended health care to up to 5 million children. This year, I challenge Congress to take the next historic steps.

One hundred sixty million of our fellow citizens are in managed care plans. These plans save money and they can improve care. But medical decisions ought to be made by medical doctors, not insurance company accountants. (Applause.) I urge this Congress to reach across the aisle and write into law a Consumer Bill of Rights that says this: You have the right to know all your medical options, not just the cheapest. You have the right to choose the doctor you want for the care you need. (Applause.) You have the right to emergency room care, wherever and whenever you need it. (Applause.) You have the right to keep your medical records confidential. (Applause.) Traditional care or managed care, every American deserves quality care. (Applause.)



Millions of Americans between the ages of 55 and 65 have lost their health insurance. Some are retired; some are laid off; some lose their coverage when their spouses retire. After a lifetime of work, they are left with nowhere to turn. So I ask the Congress: Let these hard-working Americans buy into the Medicare system. It won't add a dime to the deficit -- but the peace of mind it will provide will be priceless. (Applause.)

Next, we must help parents protect their children from the gravest health threat that they face: an epidemic of teen smoking, spread by multimillion-dollar marketing campaigns. I challenge Congress: Let's pass bipartisan, comprehensive legislation that improve public health, protect our tobacco farmers, and change the way tobacco companies do business forever. Let's do what it takes to bring teen smoking down. Let's raise the price of cigarettes by up to \$1.50 a pack over the next 10 years, with penalties on the tobacco industry if it keeps marketing to our children. (Applause.)

Tomorrow, like every day, 3,000 children will start smoking, and 1,000 will die early as a result. Let this Congress be remembered as the Congress that saved their lives. (Applause.)

In the new economy, most parents work harder than ever. They face a constant struggle to balance their obligations to be good workers -- and their even more important obligations to be good parents. The Family and Medical Leave Act was the very first bill I was privileged to sign into law as President in 1993. (Applause.) Since then, about 15 million people have taken advantage of it, and I've met a lot of them all across this country. I ask you to extend that law to cover 10 million more workers, and to give parents time off when they have to go see their children's teachers or take them to the doctor. (Applause.)

Child care is the next frontier we must face to enable people to succeed at home and at work. Last year, I co-hosted the very first White House Conference on Child Care with one of our foremost experts, America's First Lady. (Applause.) From all corners of America, we heard the same message, without regard to region or income or political affiliation: We've got to raise the quality of child care. We've got to make it safer. We've got to make it more affordable.

So here's my plan: Help families to pay for child care for a million more children. Scholarships and background checks for child care workers, and a new emphasis on early learning. Tax credits for businesses that provide child care for their employees. And a larger child care tax credit for working families. Now, if you pass my plan, what this means is that a family of four with an income of \$35,000 and high child care costs will no longer pay a single penny of federal income tax. (Applause.)

I think this is such a big issue with me because of my own personal experience. I have often wondered how my mother, when she was a young widow, would have been able to go away to school and get an education and come back and support me if my grandparents hadn't been able to take care of me. She and I were really very lucky. How many other families have never had that same opportunity? The truth is, we don't know the answer to that question. But we do know what the answer should be: Not a single American family should ever have to choose between the job they need and the child they love. (Applause.)

A society rooted in responsibility must provide safe streets, safe schools, and safe neighborhoods. We pursued a strategy of more police, tougher punishment, smarter prevention, with crime-fighting partnerships with local law enforcement and citizen groups, where the rubber hits the road. I can report to you tonight that it's working. Violent crime is down, robbery is down, assault is down, burglary is down -- for five years in a row, all across America. (Applause.) We need to finish the job of putting 100,000 more police on our streets. (Applause.)

Again, I ask Congress to pass a juvenile crime bill that provides more prosecutors and probation officers, to crack down on gangs and guns and drugs, and bar violent juveniles from buying guns for life. (Applause.) And I ask you to dramatically expand our support for after-school programs. (Applause.) I think every American should know that most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 3:00 in the afternoon and 8:00 at night. We can keep so many of our children out of trouble in the first place if we give them someplace to go other than the streets, and we ought to do it. (Applause.)

Drug use is on the decline. I thank General McCaffrey for his leadership. And I thank this Congress for passing the largest antidrug budget in history. (Applause.) I ask you to join me in a ground-breaking effort to hire 1,000 new border patrol agents and to deploy the most sophisticated available new technologies to help close the door on drugs at our borders. (Applause.)

Police, prosecutors, and prevention programs, as good as they are, they can't work if our court system doesn't work. Today there are large number of vacancies in the federal courts. Here is what the Chief Justice of the United States wrote: Judicial vacancies cannot remain at such high levels indefinitely without eroding the quality of justice. I simply ask the United States Senate to heed this plea, and vote on the highly qualified judicial nominees before you, up or down. (Applause.)

We must exercise responsibility not just at home, but around the world. On the eve of a new century, we have the power and the duty to build a new era of peace and security. But, make no mistake about it, today's possibilities are not tomorrow's guarantees. America must stand against the poisoned appeals of extreme nationalism. We must combat an unholy axis of new threats from terrorists, international criminals and drug traffickers. These 21st century predators feed on technology and the free flow of information and ideas and people. And they will be all the more lethal if weapons of mass destruction fall into their hands.

To meet these challenges, we are helping to write international rules of the road for the 21st century, protecting those who join the family of nations and isolating those who do not. Within days, I will ask the Senate for its advice and consent to make Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic the newest members of NATO. (Applause.) For 50 years, NATO contained communism and kept America and Europe secure. Now these three formerly communist countries have said yes to democracy. I ask the Senate to say yes to them -- our new allies. (Applause.)

By taking in new members and working closely with new partners, including Russia and Ukraine, NATO can help to assure that Europe is a stronghold for peace in the 21st century.

Next, I will ask Congress to continue its support for our troops and their mission in Bosnia.

(Applause.) This Christmas, Hillary and I traveled to Sarajevo with Senator and Mrs. Dole and a bipartisan congressional delegation. We saw children playing in the streets, where two years ago they were hiding from snipers and shells. The shops are filled with food; the cafes were alive with conversation. The progress there is unmistakable -- but it is not yet irreversible.

To take firm root, Bosnia's fragile peace still needs the support of American and allied troops when the current NATO mission ends in June. I think Senator Dole actually said it best. He said, "This is like being ahead in the 4th quarter of a football game. Now is not the time to walk off the field and forfeit the victory." (Applause.)

I wish all of you could have seen our troops in Tuzla. They're very proud of what they're doing in Bosnia. And we're all very proud of them. (Applause.) One of those brave soldiers is sitting with the First Lady tonight -- Army Sergeant Michael Tolbert. His father was a decorated Vietnam vet. After college in Colorado, he joined the Army. Last year, he led an infantry unit that stopped mob of extremists from taking over a radio station that is a voice of democracy and tolerance in Bosnia. Thank you very much, Sergeant, for what you represent. (Applause.)

In Bosnia and around the world, our men and women in uniform always do their mission well. Our mission must be to keep them well-trained and ready, to improve their quality of life, and to provide the 21st century weapons they need to defeat any enemy. (Applause.)

I ask Congress to join me in pursuing an ambitious agenda to reduce the serious threat of weapons of mass destruction. This year, four decades after it was first proposed by President Eisenhower, a comprehensive nuclear test ban is within reach. By ending nuclear testing we can help to prevent the development of new and more dangerous weapons and make it more difficult for non-nuclear states to build them.

I'm pleased to announce four former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- Generals John Shalikashvili, Colin Powell, and David Jones, and Admiral William Crowe -- have endorsed this treaty. And I ask the Senate to approve it this year. (Applause.)

Together, we also must also confront the new hazards of chemical and biological weapons, and the outlaw states, terrorists and organized criminals seeking to acquire them. Saddam Hussein has spent the better part of this decade, and much of his nation's wealth, not on providing for the Iraqi people, but on developing nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons -- and the missiles to deliver them. The United Nations weapons inspectors have done a truly remarkable job, finding and destroying more of Iraq's arsenal than was destroyed during the entire Gulf War. Now Saddam Hussein wants to stop them from completing their mission.

I know I speak for everyone in this chamber, Republicans and Democrats, when I say to Saddam Hussein: You cannot defy the will of the world. (Applause.) And when I say to him: You have used weapons of mass destruction before; we are determined to deny you the capacity to use them again. (Applause.)

Last year, the Senate ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention to protect our soldiers and citizens from poison gas. Now we must act to prevent the use of disease as a weapon of war and terror. The Biological Weapons Convention has been in effect for 23 years now. The rules are good, but the enforcement is weak. We must strengthen it with a new international inspection system to detect and deter cheating.

In the months ahead, I will pursue our security strategy with old allies in Asia and Europe, and new partners from Africa to India and Pakistan, from South America to China. And from Belfast, to Korea to the Middle East, America will continue to stand with those who stand for peace.

Finally, it's long past time to make good on our debt to the United Nations. (Applause.) More and more, we are working with other nations to achieve common goals. If we want America to lead, we've got to set a good example. (Applause.) As we see so clearly in Bosnia, allies who share our goals can also share our burdens. In this new era, our freedom and independence are actually enriched, not weakened, by our increasing interdependence with other nations. But we have to do our part.

Our founders set America on a permanent course toward "a more perfect union." To all of you I say it is a journey we can only make together -- living as one community. First, we have to continue to reform our government -- the instrument of our national community. Everyone knows elections have become too expensive, fueling a fundraising arms race. This year, by March 6th, at long last the Senate will actually vote on bipartisan campaign finance reform proposed by Senators McCain and Feingold. Let's be clear: A vote against McCain and Feingold is a vote for soft money and for the status quo. I ask you to strengthen our democracy and pass campaign finance reform this year. (Applause.)

At least equally important, we have to address the real reason for the explosion in campaign costs -- the high cost of media advertising. (Applause.) To the folks watching at home, those were the groans of pain in the audience. (Laughter.) I will formally request that the Federal Communications Commission act to provide free or reduced-cost television time for candidates who observe spending limits voluntarily. (Applause.) The airwaves are a public trust, and broadcasters also have to help us in this effort to strengthen our democracy.

Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, we've reduced the federal payroll by 300,000 workers, cut 16,000 pages of regulation, eliminated hundreds of programs and improved the operations of virtually every government agency. But we can do more. Like every taxpayer, I'm outraged by the reports of abuses by the IRS. We need some changes there -- new citizen advocacy panels, a stronger taxpayer advocate, phone lines open 24 hours a day, relief for innocent taxpayers. Last year, by an overwhelming bipartisan margin, the House of Representatives passed sweeping IRS reforms. (Applause.) This bill must not now languish in the Senate. Tonight I ask the Senate: follow the House, pass the bipartisan package as your first order of business. (Applause.)

I hope to goodness before I finish I can think of something to say, "follow the Senate" on, so I'll be out of trouble. (Laughter.)

A nation that lives as a community must value all its communities. For the past five years, we have worked to bring the spark of private enterprise to inner city and poor rural areas --with community development banks, more commercial loans in the poor neighborhoods, cleanup of polluted sites for development. Under the continued leadership of the Vice President, we propose to triple the number of empowerment zones, to give business incentives to invest in those areas. (Applause.)

We should also should give poor families more help to move into homes of their own, and we should use tax cuts to spur the construction of more low-income housing. (Applause.)

Last year, this Congress took strong action to help the District of Columbia. Let us renew our resolve to make our capital city a great city for all who live and visit here. (Applause.) Our cities are the vibrant hubs of great metropolitan areas. They are still the gateways for new immigrants, from every continent, who come here to work for their own American Dreams. Let's keep our cities going strong into the 21st century. They're a very important part of our future. (Applause.)

Our communities are only as healthy as the air our children breathe, the water they drink, the Earth they will inherit. Last year, we put in place the toughest-ever controls on smog and soot. We moved to protect Yellowstone, the Everglades, Lake Tahoe. We expanded every

community's right to know about the toxins that threaten their children. Just yesterday, our food safety plan took effect, using new science to protect consumers from dangers like E. coli and salmonella. (Applause.)

Tonight, I ask you to join me in launching a new Clean Water Initiative, a far-reaching effort to clean our rivers, our lakes, our coastal waters for our children. (Applause.)

Our overriding environmental challenge tonight is the worldwide problem of climate change, global warming, the gathering crisis that requires worldwide action. The vast majority of scientists have concluded unequivocally that if we don't reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, at some point in the next century we'll disrupt our climate and put our children and grandchildren at risk. This past December, America led the world to reach a historic agreement committing our nation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through market forces, new technologies, energy efficiency. We have it in our power to act right here, right now. I propose \$6 billion in tax cuts and research and development to encourage innovation, renewable energy, fuel-efficient cars, energy-efficient homes.

Every time we have acted to heal our environment, pessimists have told us it would hurt the economy. Well, today our economy is the strongest in a generation, and our environment is the cleanest in a generation. We have always found a way to clean the environment and grow the economy at the same time. And when it comes to global warming, we'll do it again. (Applause.)

Finally, community means living by the defining American value -- the ideal heard round the world that we are all created equal. Throughout our history, we haven't always honored that ideal and we've never fully lived up to it. Often it's easier to believe that our differences matter more than what we have in common. It may be easier, but it's wrong.

What we have to do in our day and generation to make sure that America becomes truly one nation -- what do we have to do? We're becoming more and more and more diverse. Do you believe we can become one nation? The answer cannot be to dwell on our differences, but to build on our shared values. We all cherish family and faith, freedom and responsibility. We all want our children to grow up in a world where their talents are matched by their opportunities.

I've launched this national initiative on race to help us recognize our common interests and to bridge the opportunity gaps that are keeping us from becoming one America. Let us begin by recognizing what we still must overcome. Discrimination against any American is un-American. (Applause.) We must vigorously enforce the laws that make it illegal. I ask your help to end the backlog at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Sixty thousand of our fellow citizens are waiting in line for justice, and we should act now to end their wait. (Applause.)

We also should recognize that the greatest progress we can make toward building one America lies in the progress we make for all Americans, without regard to race. When we open the doors of college to all Americans, when we rid all our streets of crime, when there are jobs available to people from all our neighborhoods, when we make sure all parents have the child care they need, we're helping to build one nation.

We, in this chamber and in this government, must do all we can to address the continuing American challenge to build one America. But we'll only move forward if all our fellow citizens -- including every one of you at home watching tonight -- is also committed to this cause.

We must work together, learn together, live together, serve together. On the forge of common enterprise Americans of all backgrounds can hammer out a common identity. We see it today in the United States military, in the Peace Corps, in AmeriCorps. Wherever

people of all races and backgrounds come together in a shared endeavor and get a fair chance, we do just fine. With shared values and meaningful opportunities and honest communication and citizen service, we can unite a diverse people in freedom and mutual respect. We are many; we must be one. (Applause.)

In that spirit, let us lift our eyes to the new millennium. How will we mark that passage? It just happens once every thousand years. This year, Hillary and I launched the White House Millennium Program to promote America's creativity and innovation, and to preserve our heritage and culture into the 21st century. Our culture lives in every community, and every community has places of historic value that tell our stories as Americans. We should protect them. I am proposing a public-private partnership to advance our arts and humanities, and to celebrate the millennium by saving American's treasures, great and small.

And while we honor the past, let us imagine the future. Think about this -- the entire store of human knowledge now doubles every five years. In the 1980s, scientists identified the gene causing cystic fibrosis -- it took nine years. Last year, scientists located the gene that causes Parkinson's Disease -- in only nine days. Within a decade, "gene chips" will offer a road map for prevention of illnesses throughout a lifetime. Soon we'll be able to carry all the phone calls on Mother's Day on a single strand of fiber the width of a human hair. A child born in 1998 may well live to see the 22nd century.

Tonight, as part of our gift to the millennium, I propose a 21st Century Research Fund for path-breaking scientific inquiry -- the largest funding increase in history for the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the National Cancer Institute. (Applause.)

We have already discovered genes for breast cancer and diabetes. I ask you to support this initiative so ours will be the generation that finally wins the war against cancer, and begins a revolution in our fight against all deadly diseases. (Applause.)

As important as all this scientific progress is, we must continue to see that science serves humanity, not the other way around. We must prevent the misuse of genetic tests to discriminate against any American. (Applause.) And we must ratify the ethical consensus of the scientific and religious communities, and ban the cloning of human beings. (Applause.)

We should enable all the world's people to explore the far reaches of cyberspace. Think of this -- the first time I made a State of the Union speech to you, only a handful of physicists used the World Wide Web. Literally, just a handful of people. Now, in schools, in libraries, homes and businesses, millions and millions of Americans surf the Net every day. We must give parents the tools they need to help protect their children from inappropriate material on the Internet. But we also must make sure that we protect the exploding global commercial potential of the Internet. We can do the kinds of things that we need to do and still protect our kids.

For one thing, I ask Congress to step up support for building the next generation Internet. It's getting kind of clogged, you know. And the next generation Internet will operate at speeds up to a thousand times faster than today.

Even as we explore this inner space in a new millennium we're going to open new frontiers in outer space. Throughout all history, humankind has had only one place to call home -- our planet Earth. Beginning this year, 1998, men and women from 16 countries will build a foothold in the heavens -- the international space station. With its vast expanses, scientists and engineers will actually set sail on an uncharted sea of limitless mystery and unlimited potential. (Applause.)

And this October, a true American hero, a veteran pilot of 149 combat missions and one, five-hour space flight that changed the world, will return to the heavens. Godspeed, John

Glenn. (Applause.) John, you will carry with you America's hopes. And on your uniform, once again, you will carry America's flag, marking the unbroken connection between the deeds of America's past and the daring of America's future.

Nearly 200 years ago, a tattered flag, its broad stripes and bright stars still gleaming through the smoke of a fierce battle, moved Francis Scott Key to scribble a few words on the back of an envelope -- the words that became our national anthem. Today, that Star Spangled Banner, along with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, are on display just a short walk from here. They are America's treasures and we must also save them for the ages.

I ask all Americans to support our project to restore all our treasures so that the generations of the 21st century can see for themselves the images and the words that are the old and continuing glory of America; an America that has continued to rise through every age, against every challenge, of people of great works and greater possibilities, who have always, always found the wisdom and strength to come together as one nation -- to widen the circle of opportunity, to deepen the meaning of our freedom, to form that "more perfect union." Let that be our gift to the 21st century.

God bless you, and God bless the United States. (Applause.)

What's New - January 1998

Education Initiatives

Drug Testing and Treatment Efforts

Champaign-Urbana

Health Care Bill of Rights

La Crosse, WI

Legislation to Reduce Smoking

The Military in the 21st Century

Law Enforcement Announcement

U.S. Conference on Mayors

Charter of Partnership with Baltic States

Historic Child Care Initiative

MLK Day

Work study program funding

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