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White House Press Release

By Mtv

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

Internal Transcript

March 1, 1993

Interview Of The President
By Mtv

Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

2:17 P.M. Est

Q It was an obviously very impressive reception. The kids out there are very excited about the **national public service** program. But isn't it true that all the kids out there that wanted to take part in this program wouldn't necessarily be able to do so?

The President: Well, it depends on how many want to take part and how quickly. We're going to start with doing something I didn't even talk about in the campaign, and that is allowing young people to earn credit against college loans before they ever go to college. And we'll start with about 35,000 of them. And then for young people coming out of college who want to work off their loans through being teachers, police officers, or whatever, we have the funds now to go up to 100,000 of them within four years. We don't believe there will be more than 100,000. If there are, I'll go back to the Congress and try to get some more money.

I want to try to get as many people in **service** as we can. I think after about six or seven years we could be up to about a half a million. But it takes time -- in the nature of these things, it takes time to build it up.

And because we're also going to make it possible for people to pay their loans off as a percentage of their income over a longer period of time, that will make the loans themselves less burdensome. So while a lot of young people may want to do the **service**, it will also be easier for people who want to go on with

their lives and do something else to at least pay those loans off.

Q So high school graduates as well as college students should be paying attention?

The President: Correct, high school graduates shall also pay attention. For example, if a high school graduate would be interested in, say, working a year or so before going to college in a community **service** project, then they could accumulate a significant amount of credit against a college education.

Q Like a voucher or something?

The President: That's right.

And we're also trying to work out a third leg of this for students who want to serve while they're in college, trying to figure out exactly how many weeks you'd have to do and how much money we'd serve. But that would then take account of the full spectrum of college student desires to serve and would enable us to help the largest number of people.

Q Mr. President, during our Choose Or Lose forum, you used the words "any American can borrow the money to go to college." Does this scaled-back **national service** program mean that you're stepping away from that?

The President: No, no. They should all be able to borrow.

Q But not the first year?

The President: No. They should all be able to borrow the first year. We're going to try to convert the program in the beginning to an income -- the buzzword is income contingent. That is, from the beginning -- I'm even looking at how to convert existing college loans to income based loans.

Q But the difference is they would -- the majority of people would be paying back through their income; they wouldn't be paying through **national service**, right?

The President: Yes. But -- well, we always knew that would be the case. That is, by all surveys, anything we've ever done, we knew that would be the case. But keep in mind -- let me just try to draw some comparisons. The largest number of people who ever served in the Peace Corps is 16,000. We're going to start with a program that will fund 35,000, or more than twice that many slots, for kids before they go to college. We are assuming that will be at 100,000 students after college who will want to serve and work their loan off. If the demand for **service** significantly exceeds that, I really -- I believe we'll have no trouble getting the Congress to go along with funding it.

In other words, what we've tried to do is to put a funding level in that measures what we think are the maximum number of young people who will choose the **service** option. If more people choose the **service** option -- I need a year or so to get the kinks worked out and to build it up, but if more people in like the second, third, fourth year of my presidency choose the **service** option, I'll just go back to Congress and try to get the money to fund it.

Q But right now, as I'm sure you know, there are only about 30,000 **national public service** jobs out there. But this program will accelerate the available slots?

The President: Yes. This program will add another 35,000 for pre-college and another 100,000 for post-college -- after college. And we'll start there. Then if the demand exceeds the supply, I'll go back to Congress and get some more money for it.

Q The Peace Corps was very small, but you mentioned Fdr's Civilian Conservation Corps, and that had, what, 2.5 million people in it. Why do you expect this to only have 100,000 after four years?

The President: Well, because in the Ccc, which had 2.5 million people, 25 percent of the American work force was unemployed and very few young people were in college. Here you have about four million student loans outstanding. Let's assume that we have -- we get up to five million outstanding, and what I think will happen is that eventually we'll get to 10 percent of those with loans electing **service**. I think we will get to a half a million. I'll be surprised and disappointed if we don't. But I don't believe we'll get above 150,000 total. That is, the **service** positions there now, the 100,000 we're going to create, and the 35,000 or more pre-college. I don't think we'll get above that in the first four years of the plan. If we do, I'll just go back to the Congress for more money. I hope we do.

Q Even though it's so expensive? I mean, it costs about \$18,000 a year to support a student in a public **service** program, right? Approximately?

The President: Well, it depends on how you do it. If you -- for the students who come out of college and then they want to work, it would cost us about that to pay 105 percent of minimum wage, health insurance, and give them a \$10,000 credit against their college loan per year.

Q Are businesses going to help pay?

The President: We think businesses will help. And also, keep in mind, even though a lot of the people who are watching us may have borrowed -- may owe as much as \$20,000 when they get out of college, the average student debt coming out of college is about \$6,500.

So a lot of young people could work off this in a year, which means, by the way, that we could fund more than a 100,000 positions of that. In other words, this 100,000 positions is based on a certain assumption about the division between those who chose to work one year and those who chose to work two. If you were -- if we can work it out so that there aren't as many doing two and more doing one then we'll have more slots there, too.

Q Right. You mentioned the Peace Corps in your speech. Do you regret not joining the Peace Corps?

The President: Well, I wish I had -- I wish I had done it in a way. I wish I'd had a chance to work in another country. And I think if I hadn't gotten the scholarship to go to England and live it's something I might well have done. I thought about -- I wanted to live in another country and get involved with people in the other country and I wish now I'd been able to go particularly to a more distant culture, if you will.

Q Is the **National Public Service** Program something you would like Chelsea to join?

The President: Oh, sure. She loves **service**. One of the reasons she was so interested in picking the school she's now in is that a condition of being a student there is doing community **service**. That's one of the things that she wanted. She really believes in that.

Q Is there a particular area that she's interested in working?

The President: No. I mean, she likes a lot of different things. She likes working with other kids. And she also likes solving -- trying to solve problems that bother her a lot. Homelessness bothers her a lot and she's very concerned about the environment. I think right now, like a lot of young people her age, environmental issues are probably her top public concern.

Q In a time of publicly scarce funds, why not rule out the kids who have wealthy parents who can pay for college straight out?

The President: Well, the wealthiest students can pay their loans back which means that they would only chose this program if they wanted to serve. And in some ways I think that one strength of this program is that you'll have poor people and wealthy people and people in between working together. A wealthy person shouldn't be deprived of the opportunity to work in a community **service** program. Indeed, I expect a lot of wealthy young people will go ahead and pay their college loan back and do **service** anyway. I think a lot of them will do that.

Q How are you going to get labor unions to agree to **national service** doing real work and not just make work?

The President: By having a nonsubstitution agreement. Let me give you an example. Suppose --

Q So they're not displaced?

The President: Yes, nondisplacement. Let's take the police example. There will have to be a showing by a city that they're not displacing anybody from an existing job in a police job or a teaching job -- to be able to have one of the **national service** teachers.

Now, also, after the teacher or the police officer has worked off the **service**, whether it's a year or two years, then they would obviously have the option to hire these folks at regular -- on regular terms, in which case, they would then become a member of the teacher's organization or the police union or whatever. So I don't think they should be worried about that.

Q Do you think there's any chance of the head labor union telling you in the Oval Office that, yes, we don't have a problem with this, but the labor unions actually on the ground, the local ones, having people making copies and raking things over twice instead of doing real work?

The President: Well --

Q Because some of your biggest supporters are labor unions.

The President: Could be, but I doubt it. That is, I think -- I do believe that the further you go down in some of these organizations there may be more opposition. But it's probably

because we haven't talked about it as much. But the agreement that I made when I came up with this proposal is that there would be a strict no displacement rule. It would be wrong to take a job away from a family breadwinner, because **national service** workers are less costly.

Q And programs like City Year, they have a good relationship with unions, you know --

The President: Yes. And in City Year -- see, in those programs, which involve a lot of pre-college and college students working with others, one of the things, they do work that cities can't afford to do. Now, that's another thing. You've got teachers, you've got police officers, then you've got this work that arguably would be done by city government or county government if anybody could afford to do it -- you know, painting the senior citizens centers and doing all the supplemental work for --

Q Cleaning up parks and things like that?

The President: You've got it. And a lot of them just can't afford to do it. And I think what happens there is that's worked out between the mayor, the city council, and the public employees organizations. And they know that they can't afford to do it. And a lot of them, frankly, would rather have citizens groups do it because that way you can have fewer public employees and their salaries and benefits can be stronger than if you have to spread it out and hire a lot of other people.

Q What's your rationale in deciding this youth program is a better way to spend this money than to reduce the deficit -- something young people obviously are very worried about?

The President: That I think we have to do both. I think that you can make that argument. For example, we could reduce the deficit even more if we spent no money on **national service** and technologies, Head Start for kids who need it, just to take three examples -- or rebuilding the roads and building fast trains or dealing with any of these infrastructure issues.

The problem is if you compare America to other countries, other high-wage countries, what leaps out at you is that we -- our deficit is too big, but that we're actually investing a smaller percentage of our income on things that create jobs and opportunities in other **nations**. For example, nine **nations** invest a higher percentage of their income in high school -- kindergarten through high school education than we do. And if we reduce the deficit, but our people are not well educated and skilled and we haven't dealt with a lot of our people problems, then we still won't be a high-wage country. So what I try to do is to do balance, invest more, reduce the deficit more.

Q In Bush's 1990 budget deal didn't the former administration reduce the budget more than you're planning to do now?

The President: No, no. They alleged that they were going to --

Q So this negotiated \$482 billion of cuts -- I have you at \$473 billion.

The President: But the reason that theirs didn't do it is that they had a lot of unspecified caps and blankets and things like that. And one of the things that has gotten the Congress and the President in trouble in the past is trying to negotiate deficit

reduction targets and say, well, we're just going to put a cap on this spending and that spending. It almost never works, especially in the health care area.

Q So you can do the math but it doesn't --

The President: Yes. So what I said was I was going to give them very specific cuts. Another reason that they didn't reduce the deficit any more is that they over estimated pretty dramatically how much money was going to come in from -- on their tax increases because the recession went on longer.

So I decided this year I would go to the Congress and say, look, let's take the most conservative estimate we can find of how much money's going to come in and let's put these deficit reduction figures in that, so that in all probability we'll have even more money than we think and the deficit will go down even more. But let's be really, really conservative and very, very specific. They were too generous in the revenue estimates and they were too unspecific in the budget cuts.

Q Let's talk a little bit about the Summer In **Service** program. Can you briefly run down the particulars for me because this is going to start in June if Congress acts swiftly, right?

The President: Correct. We're going to invite 1,000 people, based on probably -- you may have 50,000 students asked to be a part of it. I invited them today in my speech -- anybody that wants to be part of the Summer In **Service** to do it. We're going to invite young people from all walks of life, various ages, different interests, and we're going to put them through an intense leadership training program in **service**, giving them examples of how to work with older people, with kids who need tutors, community projects, with a whole range of projects, and also try and develop leadership training skills. Then we're going to have a youth summit after that on youth **service**. And we're going to feature these 1,000 people and we're going to try to use them. We're going to let as many as we want to stay in the program and be team leaders of projects.

Q So if you get 50,000 applications you're going to find 50,000 kids summer jobs?

The President: Oh, no, we're going to have -- if my plan passes we'll have 608,000 summer jobs. But we just want 1,000 people, in effect, to be in a laboratory this summer on youth **service**, so that we can learn how to train youth leaders and hopefully begin a training process which will enable them to train others.

Q As I understand it, you are going to use successful programs that are already in place, so you don't start an entirely new bureaucracy. Does that mean if you don't live near a City Year or one of the programs in another city that you are out of luck?

The President: No. What it means -- no, because we are going to have a formula set up so that every state is going to get some money and every significant community. But one of the things we want to do is to see if we can develop a training program which will develop a critical mass of young people, and then we can send into these communities to help them set up their own programs if they don't have them. That's one of the things we hope will come out of this summer program.

Q I see. I wanted to ask you about the energy tax. To offset that, you're offering a earned income tax credit to

families that make under \$30,000 a year. Where is the reimbursement for singles in lower income brackets like a lot of young people?

The President: They're going to get it, too. This is the first time the earned income tax credit has every been available to single people. And we did it --

Q -- so they, young people won't be paying more for their heat or their car, to put the gas in their car?

The President: Well, some will. It will depend on what their income is. But --

Q If it's under \$30,000?

The President: Under \$30,000. On average, the last income figures we have -- and we run these things on a regular basis so if they change I'll tell you -- but the last income figures we have indicate that at \$30,000 in taxable income the bill will be \$20-\$21, something like that. Under that, we have done our dead level best to hold everybody harmless, both families and individuals, through this earned income tax credit.

The central thing that's important about it, though, really is the family issue because there are too many families who have someone who works 40 hours a week and they are still in poverty. And our goal is to alter the tax code including refunding taxes if necessary to say people that really put in 40 hours a week, especially if they have children in the home, simply shouldn't be in poverty. Almost no single people who work 40 hours a week are in poverty.

Q Okay. I just want to ask you one last question. Have you seen any of our Free Your Mind Coverage? Basically, Choose Or Lose has now turned into Free Your Mind and Mtv is trying to promote tolerance among people and celebrate their differences. What could you say to young people to look at each other with more of an open mind?

The President: I would say two things. One is, this country's great challenge is to develop the capacities of everybody in America. And unless we learn not only to endure one another but to actually celebrate one another's differences we're not going to be able to do that.

The second think I would say is it's a better way to live, it's more fun. I mean, if we can prove in America that we can accommodate now well over 150 different racial, ethnic, and religious groups and really live not only in peace but in true harmony, in joy, genuinely being proud of the differences that exist among us, then we will likely triumph well into the 21st century in a global economy and a global society. And I think Mtv can make a major contribution to that.

You know, I was in a room today in New Jersey with two Asian Americans, with one woman who's applying for citizenship from Israel, with a good number of African Americans and a number of Hispanic Americans who came from different Latin countries, and a variety of ethnic groups of Caucasians who came from different countries, their forbearers did. And I got to thinking and talking to them about the sectoral hatreds in Somalia where the racial and ethnic differences are not as great, the powerful fights in Bosnia, where there are differences but they don't superficially seem to be as great as the ones we have in this country. If we can whip this difficulty, if we really can learn, not only to tolerate but to

embrace each other, I'm convinced that we will then move very quickly to manage our social problems better, to manage our educational challenges better and I think in the end it will be an enormous economic boost to America.

I think that the younger people, people, let's say, 30 and under have very little chance of preserving the American Dream unless they can solve the diversity problems. On the other hand, if they can solve it looking where the worlds going they have a better chance in America of having a great future than in any of the countries that are more closed.

Q Then let me just -- how confident are you that motor voter is going to pass?

The President: I believe it's going to pass but I need the help of the Mtv watchers again. You know, it passed last year and then it was vetoed. Now, it has passed the House of Representatives again. But the opponents of motor voter in the Senate may want to force parliamentary battles which will require 60 of the 100 senators to vote on credible issues to basically bring motor voter to my desk.

So I would just say to anybody who is watching us who cares about motor voter, it is a big part of my political reform package, along with campaign finance reform and lobby reform. We need motor voter. And it would be a shame, as much as you've done on rock the vote, as hard as you've worked, to lose it now. So I would say to everybody if you know your senator, or whether you do or not, write them, call the senator's office, tell them to please, please push the motor voter bill out and send it to the President's desk. It does have an impact when people call or write. It matters to your elected representatives and they need to know that the young people of this country have not forgotten about motor voter. We have a huge increase in the percentage of young people voting in this last election -- may have been the difference in my election.

Q And they can do the same thing about the **national public service** plan.

The President: Absolutely, same thing on **national service**. Tell the senators and congressmen we want **national service**. America needs it.

Q Thank you.

I read a rather interesting report. Is it true that a steward walked into the room unannounced while you and Hillary were in bed and you put an end to that practice in the White House?

The President: Well, it wasn't so lusty as that sounds. We were not up yet and a steward came in. And then I asked him to always come in the back door if they had to do something. They're very helpful, the people that work there, but the guy just honestly thought we were up and we weren't. I mean, it was an honest mistake.

Q Okay, I'll take your word for it.

What's the first thing you read every morning?

The President: The first thing I read every morning normally are the headlines in three or four newspapers when I go into breakfast.

Q Which are?

The President: The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and Usa Today normally I see in the breakfast room. Then I go over and have a security briefing on **national** security matters. That's the first detailed reading I do every day.

Q Every morning you do get that intelligence briefing like three killed overnight, violence in Israel. Why isn't the government set up to tell you three killed in a Chicago housing project?

The President: It's a very good question and I asked that question. And now we started daily briefings on economic and domestic issues affecting America. I said to myself, for years the President's been getting a daily **national** security briefing about things happening overseas, and things happen in America that affect a lot more people and we don't do it. So we've not got an organized economic and domestic briefing that comes into me every day.

Q Is it true that you can't order pizza into the White House because the Secret **Service** can't tell if it's been tampered with?

The President: That's right. They don't like for me to eat order-out food.

Q Are you doing it anyway?

The President: Well, once in a while I sneak around and eat it.

Q You're the first President who's a Beatles fan. Can't you reunite the three living Beatles, get them to play in the White House?

The President: It's not a bad idea; I hadn't thought of it. I would love to do it, that would be wonderful.

Q The Rolling Stones, speaking of classic rock bands, are older than you. That scares a lot of people. Does it scare you?

The President: No. Mick Jagger's taken good care of himself. He looks great. We should all be that lean.

Q Last year on our Choose Or Lose forum you said Mario Cuomo is the type of guy you would like to appoint to the Supreme Court. Do you plan to follow through on that?

The President: Well, I didn't say I would appoint him, I said he was an example of the kind of person that I think -- I still believe that. The President ought to appoint people to the Supreme Court who have a head and a heart, who have strong convictions and deep-thinking skills, and who have a lot of personal experience with the problems of America. I think that's the sort of person who ought to be on there.

Q You talked about Kennedy today, and being in New York on Friday, in light of the terrorist attacks, we were all really shaken up. Do the realities of being a natural target for a lot of lunatics, are you ever afraid?

The President: Sometimes I think about it, but not often. There's not a lot I can do about it. The Secret **Service** works hard to protect me, and I work hard to try to be accessible to people, but I try to listen to them.

Q Friday didn't send a shiver through you?

The President: No, Friday I thought about those people. I was just so sad for the people who died, the people who were wounded, the people whose lives were savaged because somebody did something really stupid. I didn't think much about myself.

Q And lastly, what's the biggest mistake that you've made since you've been in office?

The President: Gosh, what is the biggest mistake I've made since I've been in office?

On my Monday night address to the people, before I spoke to the Congress on Wednesday night, I didn't spend enough time working on the talk and it wasn't quite exactly what I wanted to say. And I guess that's an example of a bigger problem which is that there's always so much to do. If you're not careful you can work 18 hours a day, but you'll lose sight of the big things that will send strong signals to the American people. And it's so easy to lose control of the dialogue you're having with the people of the country. I think it happened to me the first week or 10 days I was in office where I was doing something and the people had an idea I was doing something else and there was no dialogue there.

So I give you that Monday night example, but there are lots of other examples there where I need to spend a lot of time thinking every day about not only what I'm doing but whether I'm still in honest communication with the people of the country. Because my ability to do anything -- since I'm all about change, I'm trying to change everything -- is to try to maintain an honest, open dialogue with the people. And if I ever lose that I'm in big trouble.

Q Who's busier these days, yourself or Hillary?

The President: Both of us are pretty busy. You know, my daughter said the other day I was easier to get on the phone. But that's because I'm more likely to be in one place. Hillary's running around a lot working on the health care.

Q Trying to get permission for the school to get aspirin?

The President: They've got about 400 people, most of them volunteers, the brightest people in the country -- doctors, nurses, health care experts, people from all over -- working relentlessly trying to solve the health care crisis.

Q A lot of young people are worried about the sin tax. There are a lot of young smokers.

The President: Well, they're not going to like me then because I don't know that we'll raise the cigarette tax in health care, but I believe that it should be raised. It's still low compared to other countries, and I think it would be a good thing if it reduced smoking because an enormous percentage of our health care costs, a huge percentage, go directly out of smoking, not only direct problems for people who are smokers, but indirect problems that are caused by it. And smoking ought to bear more of the costs of the health care problems that it causes.

Q Well, alcohol you could say the same thing though.

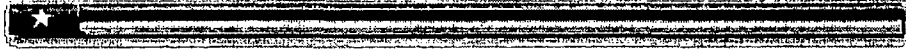
The President: You could. And then you make that argument, too. At least if you use it in moderation there's no evidence that it causes harm. There is some evidence that wine, for example, is good for your heart if you use it in moderation. There is no evidence that any level of use of tobacco is good for you.

Q Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you.

End

2:45 P.M. Est



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White House Press Release

In National Service Address

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary
(New Brunswick, New Jersey)

For Immediate Release

March 1, 1993

Remarks By The President
In National Service Address

Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

1:15 P.M. Est

The President: Thank you very much. (Applause.)
Thank you. Thank you, Nakia Tomlinson for that fine introduction. I wish I could take you with me everywhere. We'd make a great duo there. Let's give her another hand. I thought she was great. (Applause.)

I'd like to thank President Frank Lawrence for his - Francis Lawrence -- for his fine speech. Does anybody call him Frank? I should have asked. (Laughter.) I want to compliment Professor Benjamin Barber for his leadership and service here. (Applause.) And I want to thank all of you here in the **Rutgers** community for coming out for what I hope will be a truly historic moment in our nation's history. (Applause.)

In addition to the people who have been introduced here, there are a host of mayors and members of the Assembly and county officials here from your state. We have two former governors, both of whom I served with -- Brendan Byrne and Tom Kean who are out there. I'm glad to see them. (Applause.) My friends. We have a distinguished array of members of the House from New Jersey -- Herb Klein, Bob Manendez, Frank Pallone, Donald Payne -- (applause).

But you have some members of the Congress from all over America here and I want to introduce them, too, because they have taken a lot of trouble to come to **Rutgers** and because without them and without the people who represent you, the proposal I make today has no hope of passage.

Many members of the Congress for years have believed we ought to do more in national service and some of them are here today. I'd like to begin by introducing your Senator Bill Bradley, who's behind me. (Applause.) I must say, when I walked into this arena, I turned around and asked Bill Bradley if he'd ever shot any baskets in here. I'd be intimidated to be the opposing team in here. (Applause.) Senator Bradley sponsored legislation to establish neighborhood corps and self-reliance scholarships, things that are forbearers of the proposal I came to make.

I'd like to recognize the presence on the platform of Senator Ted Kennedy from Massachusetts -- (applause) -- who chairs the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education, which shepherded the pilot national and community service bill through the Congress in the last session, along with his counterpart who is out here in the audience somewhere. I'd like to ask him to stand up. The Chairman of the House Committee, Congressman Bill Ford, who came all the way from Michigan to be with us. Congressman, would you stand up. (Applause.)

I'd like to recognize in the audience the presence of Senator Chris Dodd from Connecticut, who was one of the first Peace Corps volunteers in the United States. (Applause.)

The member of Congress who introduced many, many years ago, the first piece of national service legislation ever introduced, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Clairborne Pell from Rhode Island is here. (Applause.)

I'd also like to introduce the only person in this audience, at least of our crowd, who doesn't have to look up to Senator Bradley, Senator Jay Rockefeller from West Virginia, an early Vista volunteer in the United States. (Applause.)

And finally I would like to recognize two other people, one, a member of the United States Senate and one a distinguished American citizen, the first boss of the Peace Corps, Sargent Shriver, who's up here with me. (Applause.) And his deputy, Senator Harris Wofford, from Pennsylvania. (Applause.) And Mrs. Wofford, I'm glad to see you. (Applause.)

Now, I was involved before I became President in a group called the Democratic Leadership Council, and we made one of the central parts of our platform to reclaim a new majority of Americans for our party the establishment of a system of national service to help people to finance education. And one of our founding members and guiding lights is here, Representative Dave McCurdy from Oklahoma. I'd like for him to stand up. (Applause.)

Let me make this last point, if I might, by way of beginning. None of these things happen at the national level. We empower them to happen and then people have to do things here at the grassroots. And I want to say a special word of thanks to your Governor for supporting the New Jersey Youth Corps and several other projects like it around the state, because if nobody's here to believe in this, it can't happen. And I thank Governor Florio for his support for these things. (Applause.)

I came here to ask all of you to join me in a great national adventure, for in the next few weeks I will ask the United States Congress to join me in creating a new system of voluntary national service -- something that I believe in the

next few years will change America forever and for the better.

My parents' generation won new dignity working their way out of the great Depression through programs that provided them the opportunity to serve and to survive. Brave men and women in my own generation waged and won peaceful revolutions here at home for civil rights and human rights, and began service around the world in the Peace Corps and here at home in Vista. Now, Americans of every generation face profound challenges in meeting the needs that have been neglected for too long in this country -- from city streets plagued by crime and drugs to classrooms where girls and boys must learn the skills they need for tomorrow, to hospital wards where patients need more care. All across America we have problems that demand our common attention.

For those who answer the call and meet these challenges, I propose that our country honor your service with new opportunities for education. National service will be America at its best -- building community, offering opportunity, and rewarding responsibility. National service is a challenge for Americans from every background and walk of life, and it values something far more than money. National service is nothing less than the American way to change America. (Applause.)

It is rooted in the concept of community: the simple idea that none of us on our own will ever have as much to cherish about our own lives if we are out here all alone as we will if we work together. That somehow a society really is an organism in which the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. And every one of us, no matter how many privileges with which we are born, can still be enriched by the contributions of the least of us. And that we will never fulfill our individual capacities until, as Americans, we can all be what God meant for us to be. (Applause.)

If that is so -- if that is true, my fellow Americans, and if you believe it, it must therefore follow that each of us has an obligation to serve. For it is perfectly clear that all of us cannot be what we ought to be until those of us who can help others -- and that is nearly all of us -- are doing something to help others live up to their potential. The concept of community and the idea of service are as old as our history. They began the moment America was literally invented.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortune, and our sacred honor." In the midst of the Civil War, President Lincoln signed into law two visionary programs that helped our people come together again and build America up. The Morrill Act helped states create new land grant colleges. This is a land grant **university**. The **university** in my home state was the first land grant college west of the Mississippi River.

In these places, young people learn to make American agriculture and industry the best in the world. The legacy of the Morrill Act is not only our great colleges and **universities** like **Rutgers**, but the American tradition that merit and not money should give people a chance for a higher education. (Applause.)

Mr. Lincoln also signed the Homestead Act that offered 100 acres of land for families who had the courage to settle the frontier and farm the wilderness. Its legacy is a

nation that stretches from coast to coast. Now we must create a new legacy that gives a new generation of Americans the right and the power to explore the frontiers of science and technology and space. The frontiers of the limitations of our knowledge must be pushed back so that we can do what we need to do. And education is the way to do it, just as surely as it was more than 100 years ago.

Seven decades after the Civil War in the midst of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps, which gave 2.5 million young people the opportunity to support themselves while working in disaster relief and maintaining forests, beaches, rivers, and parks. Its legacy is not only the restoration of our natural environment, but the restoration of our national spirit. Along with the Works Products Administration -- the Wpa -- the Civilian Conservation Corps symbolized government's effort to provide a nation in depression with the opportunity to work, to build the American community through service. And all over America today, you can see projects -- even today in the 1990s -- built by your parents or your grandparents with the Wpa plaque on it -- the Ccc plaque on it -- the idea that people should be asked to serve and rewarded for doing it.

In the midst of World War II, President Roosevelt proposed the Gi Bill of Rights, which offered returning veterans the opportunity for education in respect to their service to our country in the war. Thanks to the Gi Bill, which became a living reality in President Truman's time, more than eight million veterans got advanced education. And half a century later, the enduring legacy of the Gi Bill is the strongest economy in the world and the broadest, biggest middle class that any nation has ever enjoyed.

For many in my own generation, the summons to citizenship and service came on this day 32 years ago, when President Kennedy created the Peace Corps with Sargent Shriver and Harris Wofford and other dedicated Americans when President Kennedy created the Peace Corps. With Sargent Shriver and Harris Wofford and other dedicated Americans, he enabled thousands of young men and women to serve on the leading edge of the new frontier, helping people all over the world to become what they ought to be, and bringing them the message by their very lives that America was a great country that stood for good values and human progress.

At its height, the Peace Corps enrolled 16,000 young men and women. Its legacy is not simply goodwill and good works in countries all across the globe, but a profound and lasting change in the way Americans think about their own country and the world.

Shortly after the Peace Corps, Congress, under President Johnson, created the Volunteers in Service to America. Senator Jay Rockefeller, whom I introduced a moment ago, and many thousands of other Americans went to the hills and hollows of poor places, like West Virginia and Arkansas and Mississippi, to lift up Americans through their service.

The lesson of our whole history is that honoring service and rewarding responsibility is the best investment America can make. And I have seen it today. Across this great land, through the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, which took the children who lived in the neighborhoods where the riots occurred and gave them a chance to get out into nature and to clean up

their own neighborhoods and to lift themselves and their friends in the effort; in Boston with the City Year program -- with all these programs represented here in this room today, the spirit of service is sweeping this country and giving us a chance to put the quilt of America together in a way that makes a strength out of diversity; that lifts us up out of our problems; and that keeps our people looking toward a better and brighter future. (Applause.)

National service recognizes a simple but powerful truth -- that we make progress not by governmental action alone, but we do best when the people and their government work at the grassroots in genuine partnership. The idea of national service permeates many other aspects of the programs I have sought to bring to America. The economic plan that I announced to Congress, for example, will offer every child the chance for a healthy start through immunization and basic health care and Head Start. (Applause.) But still it depends on parents doing the best they can as parents and children making the most of their opportunities.

The plan can help to rebuild our cities and our small communities through physical investments that will put people to work. But Americans still must work to restore the social fabric that has been torn in too many communities. Unless people know we can work together in our schools and our offices, in our factories, unless they believe we can walk the streets safely together, and unless we do that together, governmental action alone is doomed to fail. (Applause.)

The national service plan I propose will be built on the same principles as the old GI Bill -- when people give something of invaluable merit to their country, they ought to be rewarded with the opportunity to further their education. National service will challenge our people to do the work that should and indeed must be done and cannot be done unless the American people voluntarily give themselves up to that work. It will invest in the future of every person who serves.

And as we rekindle the spirit of national service, I know it won't disappoint many of the students here to know that we also have to reform the whole system of student loans. (Applause.) We should begin by making it easier for young people to pay back their student loans and enabling them to hold jobs -- (applause) -- enabling them to hold jobs that may accomplish much, but pay little.

Today, when students borrow money for an education, the repayment plan they make is based largely on how much they have to repay, without regard to what the jobs they take themselves pay. It is a powerful incentive, therefore, for young college graduates to do just the reverse of what we might want them to do; to take a job that pays more even it is less rewarding because that is the job that will make the repayment of the loans possible. It is also, unfortunately, a powerful incentive for some not to make the payments at all, which is unforgivable.

So what we seek to do is to enable the American students to borrow the money they need for college and pay it back as a small percentage of their own income over time. This is especially important after a decade in which the cost of a college education has gone up even more rapidly than the cost of health care. (Applause.) Making a major contribution to one of the more disturbing statistics in America today, which is that

the college dropout rate in this country is now 2.5 times the high school dropout rate. We can do better than that through national service and adequate financing. (Applause.)

The present system is unacceptable, not only for students, but for the taxpayers as well. It's complicated and it's expensive. It costs the taxpayers of our country about \$4 billion every year to finance the student loan program because of loan defaults and the cost of administering the program. And I believe we can do better.

Beyond reforming this system for financing higher education, the national service program more importantly will create new opportunities for Americans to work off outstanding loans or to build up credits for future education and training opportunities.

We'll ask young people all across this country and some who aren't so young who want to further their college education to serve in our schools as teachers or tutors in reading and mathematics. We'll ask you to help our police forces across the nation, training members for a new police corps that will walk beats and work with neighborhoods and build the kind of communities ties that will prevent crime from happening in the first place so that our police officers won't have to spend all their time chasing criminals. (Applause.)

We'll ask young people to work, to help control pollution and recycle waste, to paint darkened buildings and clean up neighborhoods. (Applause.) To work with senior citizens and combat homelessness and help children in trouble get out of it and build a better life. (Applause.)

And these are just a few of the things that you will be able to, for most of the decisions about what you can do will be made by people like those in this room, people who run the programs represented by all of those wearing these different kinds of tee-shirts. We don't seek a national bureaucracy. I have spoken often about how we need to reinvent the government to make it more efficient and less bureaucratic, to make it more responsive to people at the grassroots level.

And I want national service to do just that. I want it to empower young people and their communities, not to empower yet another government bureaucracy in Washington. This is going to be your program at your level with your people. (Applause.)

And as you well know, that's what's happening all across America today. People are already serving their neighbors in their neighborhoods. Just this morning, I was inspired to see and to speak with students from **Rutgers** serving their community, from mentoring young people as Big Sisters, to helping older people learn new skills.

I met a lady today who has 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren who dropped out of school the year before I was born -- is about to become a high school graduate shortly because of the efforts of this program. (Applause.) Is she back there? Stand up. (Applause.)

I'm impressed by the spirit behind the **Rutgers** civic education and community service program: the understanding that community service enriches education, that students should not only take the lessons they learn in class out into the community, but bring the lessons they learn in the community back into the

classroom. (Applause.)

And that spirit, during this academic year alone, more than 800 students from **Rutgers** are contributing more than 60,000 hours of community service -- in New Brunswick, in Camden, in Newark, throughout this state. (Applause.)

This morning I also met with members of the New Jersey Youth Corps. Here they are. (Applause.) Stand up. (Applause.) Young people who are looking for a second chance at school, and who when coming back to finish their high school degrees, also serve in their communities. Through this program, more than 6,500 young adults have contributed over 900,000 hours of service to the state of New Jersey. (Applause.)

They've done everything from paint senior citizens' homes, to tutor and mentor children in after-school programs. For the future of our state and nation, we need more young people like those in the New Jersey Youth Corps who exemplify the spirit of service.

That spirit also moves people all across the nation. In my state, there's a young woman named Antoinette Jackson, who's a senior in a small community called Gauld, Arkansas. She's a member of the Delta Service Corps. The rural Mississippi Delta is still the poorest place in America. And in that area, she works with a "Lend a Hand" program which runs a thrift shop to provide hungry and homeless people with food and clothing. And in return, the Delta Four is going to help her attend college so that she can make an even greater contribution. (Applause.)

The spirit of service also moves a young man I met about a year ago named Stephen Spalos, who works with a City Year program in Boston. At age 23, he's had some hard times in his life. But as he puts it, City Year gave him a place and the tools to be able to start over. He works as a team leader, a mentor, a tutor, a project manager for a bunch of young people who restore senior citizens' homes.

Last year when I visited his project, he literally took his sweatshirt off his back and gave it to me so that I would never forget the kids at City Year. And I still wear it when I go jogging, always remembering what they're doing in Boston to help those kids. (Applause.)

The spirit of service moves Orah Fireman, a graduate of Wesleyan College. As a sophomore in high school, she worked with disadvantaged children in upstate New York. That experience changed her life. And during her high school and college years, she continued to work with children. And now that she is out of college, she has begun what will probably be a lifetime of service by working at a school for emotionally disturbed children in Boston. She wants other people to have the opportunity to serve, and she wrote this: Service work teaches responsibility and compassion. It fights alienation by proving to young people that they can make a difference. There is no lesson more important than that.

Well, there are stories like this in this room and all across America. And we're going to create thousands of more of them through national service. We'll work with groups with proven track records to serve their community, giving them the support they need. And if you have more good ideas, if you're entrepreneurs of national service, we'll let you compete for our form of venture capital -- develop new programs to serve your

neighbors. That's how we want the national service program to grow every year -- rewarding results, building on success, and bubbling up from the grassroots energy and compassion and intellect of America.

I don't want service to wait while this potential is wasted. That's why I want to make this summer a summer of service, when young people can not only serve their communities, but build a foundation for a new national effort. I've asked Congress to invest in and I'm asking young people to participate in a special effort in national service and leadership training just this summer. We are going to recruit about 1,000 young people from every background -- from high school dropouts to college graduates, to send to an intensive leadership training program for national service at the beginning of the summer.

Then we'll ask them to work on one of our country's most urgent problems, helping our children who are in danger of losing their God-given potential. Some of them will tutor. Some will work on programs to immunize young children from preventable childhood diseases. Some will help to develop and run recreational centers or reclaim urban parks from dealers and debris. Some will counsel people a few years younger than themselves to keep them out of gangs and into good activities. And everyone will learn about serving our country and helping our communities.

At the end of this summer, we'll bring all these people together for several days of debriefing and training, and then they'll all join in a youth service summit. I will attend the meeting and I expect to listen a lot more than I talk. I'll ask leaders from Congress, from business, labor, religious, and community groups to attend the youth service summit, too. We'll give those who serve the honor they deserve, and we'll learn a lot more about how to build this national service program. And from the thousand pioneers of this summer, I want the national service to grow 100-fold in the next four years. (Applause.)

But even when hundreds of thousands are serving, I want to maintain the pioneer spirit of this first few months, because national service can make America new again. It can help solve our problems, educate our people, and build our communities back together. So if anybody here would like to be one of those 1,000 -- or if anybody who is listening to this speech by radio or television or reads about it and would like to be one of those 1,000, drop me a card at the White House and just mark it national service. We're going to pick them. And I can't promise you'll be selected, but I promise you'll be considered. I want to engage the energies of America in this effort. (Applause.)

I also want to say that you shouldn't wait for the summer or for a new program. We need to begin now. We are going to be looking for the kinds of ideas that we ought to be funding. This is Monday. I ask you by Friday -- every one of you -- to think about what you think you can do and what we should do to be agents of renewal; to talk with your parents, your clergy, your friends, your teachers, to join the effort to renew our community and to rebuild our country; and to write to me about what you are doing. It's time for millions of us to change our country block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood -- time to return to our roots an excitement, an idealism, and an energy. (Applause.)

I have to tell you that there are some among us who do not believe that young Americans will answer a call to action, who believe that our people now measure their success merely in

the accumulation of material things. They believe this call to service will go unanswered. But I believe they are dead wrong. (Applause.)

And so, especially to the young Americans here, I ask you to prove that those who doubt you are wrong about your generation. And today I ask all of you who are young in spirit -- whether you are a 10-year-old in a service program in our schools who reads to still younger children, or a 72-year-old who has become a foster grandparent -- I ask you all to believe that you can contribute to your community and your country. And in so doing, you will find the best in yourself.

You will learn the lessons about your life that you might not ever learn any other way. You will learn again that each of us has the spark of potential to accomplish something truly and enduringly unique. You will experience the satisfaction of making a connection in a way with another person that you could do in no other way. You will learn that the joy of mastering a new skill or discovering a new insight is exceeded only by the joy of helping someone else do the same thing. You will know the satisfaction of being valued not for what you own or what you earn or what position you hold, but just because of what you have given to someone else. (Applause.) You will understand in personal ways the wisdom of the words spoken years ago by Martin Luther King who said "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve." (Applause.)

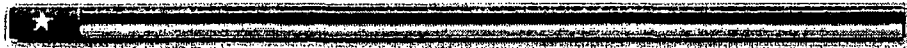
I ask you all, my fellow Americans, to support our proposal for national service and to live a proposal for national service; to learn the meaning of America at its best, and to recreate for others America at its best. We are not just another country. We have always been a special kind of community, linked by a web of rights and responsibilities, and bound together, not by bloodlines, but by beliefs. At an age in time when people all across the world are being literally torn apart by racial hatreds, by ethnic hatreds, by religious divisions, we are a nation, with all of our problems, where people can come together across racial and religious lines and hold hands and work together, not just to endure our differences, but to celebrate them. I ask you to make America celebrate that again. (Applause.)

I ask you, in closing, to commit yourselves to this season of service because America needs it. We need every one of you to live up to the fullest of your potential, and we need you to reach those who are not here and who will never hear this talk, and who will never have the future they could otherwise have if not for something that you could do. The great challenge of your generation is to prove that every person here in this great land can live up to the fullest of their God-given capacity. If we do it, the 21st century will be the American century. The American Dream will be kept alive if you will today answer the call to service.

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

End

1:50 P.M. Est





White House Press Release

In Discussion With National Service Volunteers

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary
(New Brunswick, New Jersey)

For Immediate Release

March 1, 1993

Remarks By The President
In Discussion With National Service Volunteers

Adult Learning Center
New Brunswick, New Jersey

11:20 A.M. Est

Q Welcome, Mr. President. We are so thrilled and pleased and honored to have you with us today. And we also would like to welcome Governor Florio, the Attorney General, Eli Segal from your office who works with national community service.

This is just such a treat. My name is Judy Kesin, and I am the principal of the Adult Learning Center of the New Brunswick Public Schools. We are so thrilled you could visit our program.

The Adult Learning Center -- we here view it as a place where the American Dream really plays itself out. We have adults who did not benefit from the first chance system, who have an opportunity to achieve in the second chance system. So we're excited that you can recognize that.

We have three main themes at our center. We have literacy programs -- people who come back to improve their reading; and we serve adults who need to improve their skills as well as deaf adults who come back to improve their skills. We have programs that we call second chance diploma program. So many of our students come back to school like Patty behind you here. She dropped out in the 10th grade. Patty is a 65-year-old grandmother of a 13, and she's got five great grandchildren. And this is the first opportunity that she had to come back to school.

We have lots of students who come to us for English as a second language. We have Elena Montavo. She has nine children -- and many other students as well. We have Elena back here -- is one of our Esl students. And Elena Montavo has nine children, never had the opportunity to go to school. She's from Puerto Rico and she's now moved up a level in Esl and is hoping to go on to become a nursing assistant. So it's very exciting.

We serve welfare mothers, people who are unemployed, people who need to improve their skills so that they can continue in the work force, young people who dropped out of school, like our Youth Corps students who have come back to school.

We're very proud of our center and I'd like you to know that last June when we had our graduation we honored our 1,000th graduate, high school graduate, since the program began in 1980.

In addition to all of the education programs that we offer, which we hope to help people be better prepared as citizens and parents and workers, community service is no stranger to us. We receive it and we provide it.

As in this room you will see several representatives from our community service experience. We've worked with **Rutgers** Civic Education and Community Service Program and have tutors in many of our instructional programs who have been working with us. For the last three years we've worked with them.

In addition we have --

The President: Who are students at **Rutgers**?

Q Who are undergraduates from **Rutgers**.

The President: How many of you are here who are undergraduates from **Rutgers**? Everybody in the black tee-shirts.

I've got it. Okay.

Q We also have represented **Rutgers** students who are working with the big sister-little sister program, where they are mentors at both the Lord Sterling School and Paul Robson School -- elementary schools in our school district at this table over here. And they are mentoring young students at the school from fifth to eighth graders. And these are also **Rutgers** undergraduates.

As well as at this table we have folks from a special creative arts program. We have art students from Nathan Gross, a part of **Rutgers**, who are teaching modern dance to children in the elementary school and Paul Robson school, I believe it is, after school. So those are very exciting connections.

Now, we are especially proud of our Youth Corps program -- can't you tell? (Laughter). Through a special unique partnership with the **University** of Medicine and Dentistry, my colleague here, Dr. Pauletta Heines and I have worked together on developing this program, which is one of 11 in our state. I might like to add also that we have been very fortunate that our Governor Jim Florio has been a very strong supporter of this program.

In Youth Corps -- our Youth Corps members receive assistance from -- Kenny is one of the interns -- from volunteers who work

with the program. And in addition to that, they also serve. Our Corps members have been working in the community -- we have Corps members who are tutoring children at our after school program. We have Corps members who are working to renovate a community center. And at that community center they will be including the soup kitchen -- they're building facilities for a soup kitchen where many of our Corps members work as well. Some of our Corps members have worked at an Alzheimer's day program for adults. So we have them doing all kinds of wonderful things in the community.

I might add that Corps members across the state -- each year there have been 1,100 Corps members who have provided 200,000 hours of work in the state. So we know a lot about community service and we are really proud of it.

So these are the folks that you see before you. Mr. President, we would just like you to know how much -- how pleased we are. And we feel that our program really exemplifies the values that you have so often articulated. And because of that, we have a special presentation for you. Our students at the Learning Center, who all wish that they were a part of this, but were so pleased that you got to speak with them -- wanted to present this to you.

And it says, "In recognition of your unwavering support of community service and adult education, and for your efforts to encourage and promote this partnership, we adult learners hereby present to you, President Bill Clinton, this token of our deep appreciation, presented on this 1st day of March in the year 1993 at the New Brunswick Public Schools Adult Learning Center." And we had as many of our students as we could fit -- but not all of them, because we had 22,000 -- sign this for you.

The President: That's wonderful. Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much.

Q It's our pleasure.

And now I would like to turn this over to a few of our people who would like to share some of their thoughts with you.

Q Good morning, President Clinton, Governor Florio, and Mayor Cahill and other distinguished guests. I'd like to welcome you to the Adult Learning Center in New Brunswick.

My name is David McKnight. I'm a **Rutgers** College student majoring in sociology with a minor in philosophy. I was asked today to speak to you -- or to, I guess, give you a brief testimonial about my life growing up here. As the eldest of five children growing up in an economically disadvantaged area in Trenton, I've experienced some rewarding as well as some challenging times. My family -- of course, it was very large. And therefore, my mother -- she was unable to work. And my father -- he supported the family. However, his income wasn't enough. So he had to, as a result, become -- we became recipients of public assistance. This has had a great -- I guess a psychological impact on me growing up and everything like that.

And so I guess if I could describe one instance or one incident which greatly precipitated my desire to help others, it would have to be the time -- I believe it was about nine or ten years ago. It was on a Thanksgiving Eve -- right before Thanksgiving. There was a knock at the door around 7:00 p.m. or 8:00 p.m. at night. And we weren't really expecting any guests.

And my mother opened the door and there were some people from the community -- from a church down the street. And they had two turkeys for us and some trimmings and different things like that for my family so that we could have a decent Thanksgiving meal. And that really touched our hearts.

As I saw my mother standing in the doorway crying and my father standing next to her, just smiling, not knowing what to say -- and my sisters and brothers and I standing up at the top of the stairs just looking down, laughing and jumping for joy because we had something to eat for the next night, I just -- that then and there showed me the unselfishness that the community had. And that really greatly impacted my life.

And as a result, I decided that I would devote my life to community service so that I could help others. Today, as an honor student at **Rutgers University**, which is one of the most prestigious **universities** -- residences of the country, I can stand before you and say that I didn't fall through the cracks, but I stepped over the cracks so I could become where I am today.

And I would like -- I'm standing here today because I feel that I'm a bellwether to the students here and that I would be able to help them in their future endeavors. And I would like to -- I don't know -- my parents, they did graduate from high school. And as I see so many adults sitting here, I feel that I can just share with them some of my experiences. Because, although I am in college and you may not be able to tell by the way I speak or by the appearance of me that I came from this type of background, it's true. And I have something to relate to them with. And I look forward to going to Yale Law School, your alma mater, next year. And hopefully I'll get in. That's about it. (Laughter and applause.)

The President: . Who's next?

Q I'm Betty Shockley. I'm on welfare right now, and I'm really trying to try to get off of it. I've never been on it in my life until about 10 months ago. My husband was in the service for 15 years. His leg got run over by a helicopter, so had to get out of the Army. After he got in the Army, he only was making \$80 a month. And now I'm on welfare and I'm trying to better my life, trying to get my Ged. After I get my Ged -- because I only have a third grade level. And once I get up to at least the ninth grade, tenth grade level, I can find a better job. And I want to find a better job, but I can't because of my -- Thank you very much for listening to me. (Applause.)

Q Hello, Mr. President. My name is Danyelle Marshall and I'm 18 years old. I'm a single parent of two. I'm a present member of the New Jersey Youth Corps.

The President: Take your time. Let's give her a hand. (Applause.)

Q Hello, Mr. President. My name is Danyelle Marshall and I am 19 years old, a single parent of two, a -- member of the New Jersey Youth Corps. Being in this program I have learned to make my character stronger. And I now know that my voice helps others. The teachers here are willing and able to help us in any way possible. Along with everything that I have told you, I also get a high school diploma and work experience. By participating in community service -- all this comes from the community. And I feel if the community is so willing to help me, that I can perform my share of work at -- Johnson High School to give back

what's been given to me.

This is to the young mothers who feel they cannot be a mother and a student at the same time. I'm here to tell you, bear on. And I'm learning tools to show you that it can be done.

Thank you, Mr. President, for listening and caring.
(Applause.)

The President: Who's next? Anybody else?

Well, first of all, I want to thank everyone who spoke. And maybe in a minute I could give some of you who haven't spoken a chance to say something if you want to say something.

Let me tell you why I came here today. First of all, I've been very impressed by a lot of the efforts that the state of New Jersey has already made to serve people who need an education and need a second chance and to give people a chance to serve their communities.

Secondly, this center reflects two very important things that I'm trying to do in my national economic program that I'm asking the Congress to pass. The first is what I came here to talk about, and I'm going over to **Rutgers** to talk to the students about in a few moments -- and that is the idea of giving people a chance to serve their country in their community, and in return, giving them the opportunity to further their education.

I've got the gentleman who was introduced here a minute ago with me to my right -- Eli Segal and I have been friends since we were about your age -- since we were very young. And I've asked him to head up our national and community service program. What we want to do is to provide young people the opportunity to do the following things:

Number one, if you go to college and you have loans outstanding, we want to give people the opportunity to go out in the community and do community work -- work as teachers or police officers, or work with the homeless, or work in hospitals, or work on immunizing children who need it. And doing that for a lower rate of pay for a couple of years and then pay off their college loans by doing the same.

Number two, we want to give people some credit for community service they do while they're in college. And number three, we want to give people like you the opportunity to earn some credits to get college or job training by doing community service before you go.

So the idea is to make higher education available to more people, in return for the service they give to the community.

Now, in addition to all that, we're going to change the way young people pay their college loans back. We're going to make it possible for people who get out of college to pay their loans back as a percentage -- a limited percentage of their income. Because what happens now is a lot of young people get out of college, they have big college loans, so they take -- because they have to pay the loans back, they might want to get out, let's say, and do community service work which doesn't pay very much, but instead they may take a job paying a higher salary just to make their loan repayment. So we're going to try to restructure the college loan program so that if people want to serve over a long period of time they won't be discouraged from

taking community service type jobs just because they pay less. They'll be able to pay their loans back as a percentage of their income.

Now, the other thing I want to emphasize is there's also an investment in this education program that helps centers like this. More money for adult education for people who come back after dropping out of school; more money to help welfare mothers move from dependence to independence; more money to help young people who drop out of school and come back.

When I was Governor of my state over the period of about 1983 to 1992, we increased by about six times the amount of investment in remaking education programs like this. It just exploded the number of people in it.

Now, why is that an important economic investment? Because this lady with her three children -- it wasn't her fault that her husband, first of all, is out of the service and then gets hurt, right? She can either draw taxpayer dollars by taking public assistance, or get an education and pay taxes to educate other people's children. One of the things we have to realize in this country is that economic investment is not just building an airport or a road or investing in new technology. It's also investing in people who are prepared to help themselves, to make sure that all of you can contribute in a world that is dominated by knowledge -- in a world in which the living you make depends on what you know and what you can learn.

And if every person, if every single mother in the United States could stand up and give the speech you just gave with the determination you just gave, it would not only help people like you, but you'd be helping people like me. Right? I mean, we're all better off, right? We are. And if you look at our country -- if you look at all the different racial and ethnic groups in our country, all the different levels of education, if you look at all the different levels of income, if you look at all the problems we've got, you just think about it -- if everybody in our country had a chance to get a really good high school diploma or a Ged, and then get at least two years of education and training beyond that in some way or another, and if all the while they were doing it they were doing community service work, we'd have about half as many problems than we've got -- wouldn't we?

So that's why I wanted to come here today -- to emphasize that this economic program that I'm trying to persuade the Congress to pass will help people to do what you've been doing in service, will help people who do it to pile up education credits, and we'll invest more money in programs like those here at this center.

Developing the capacity of the American people to be all they can be is perhaps the most important job that I have as President. And people now all across America will see you today, and you may have no idea how many people you will inspire today because you had the courage to do what you did -- you, or you, or you, or all of you for being here. And I really -- I thank you very much. You were great. (Applause.)

Would anybody else like to say anything or ask a question? Yes, the lady with nine children. You're a beautiful mother to have nine children. We're one of you going to talk? Yes, go ahead. Tell us your name and how you happen to be here.

Q I'm a junior from **Rutgers** College and my home town is

Atlantic City. And on behalf of the **Rutgers** community I am pleased to present you with this sweatshirt in appreciation for your outstanding commitment and dedication to the youth of America and the future of community service. (Applause.)

The President: I wish I had this this morning in Washington. (Laughter.) The wind chill factor was 13 when I was on my jog this morning. Thank you very much. It's beautiful.

Q My name is Shantel Ehrenberg. I'm a dance major at the School of the Arts, and I'm originally from Minnesota. I have a question as during our program with the children and teaching them about art and through art, eliminating prejudice and educating them on something that they find kind of foreign to them. I was wondering what you were going to do, if you have any plans for the arts, funding the arts.

The President: Programs like the one you're in will be funded basically based on the initiative of people at the local level. So if there's a program like this one at the local level which you're participating in, then it will be eligible to get community service funding.

So the answer is maybe yes, maybe no. And let me tell you why that's important. We don't want to set up a big new national bureaucracy to tell every state in every community what they should teach and what they should do. What we want to do is to build on the strengths of existing community programs like the one you're involved in. In other words, why should we come into New Jersey and create some big bureaucracy and waste a lot of money hiring people to administer programs when you've got a perfectly good program here who can access the money and use it all to put people to work teaching art or whatever else you're doing.

So the answer is that the people who are interested in arts education throughout America, once this national program is passed, should make sure that that is an important part of the community service efforts in every state and every community. Because they will be certainly eligible for it, but we're not going to tell people what to do.

As a matter of fact, we'll have relatively few mandates in this program. The two things we are going to do is to require every state to try to provide opportunities for college graduates to be either teachers or police officers because we know we've got a shortage of both of them in every state. But otherwise, particularly with the college students themselves or with young people who are like you who are in school and may be earning credit toward going to college or getting job training -- we're going to let that be highly decentralized so that you can meet the needs in each community and state.

Q I'm a **Rutgers** College graduating senior in May. And I was wondering when you think that law you're trying to instate or whatever is going to come into effect. I'm worrying, like, when I graduate in May, whether I'm going to go pursue chiropracting college or because I may not have the money for it, I may have to get a job or get in more debt to try to get into chiropracting school. And I think it's a good program that you're trying to instate, but how soon would it come that we would have a chance to excel?

The President: It's up to the Congress. We'll present the law, the bill, soon. And I'm hoping it will pass this year and

become immediately effective.

Q My name is Judy Levy Roth. I'm from Israel. I went three months ago to get my citizenship, and they failed me because I spelled -- wrong. And some people do not test -- (inaudible) -- as a test to get my citizenship. (Inaudible.) (Applause.) Not good for me -- I didn't get my citizenship.

The President: I have a feeling you will. (Laughter.)

Yes, ma'am. Do you really have five great grandchildren?

Q Yes. Mr. President, I'm just overwhelmed just sitting with you in the room -- just to look at you. (Laughter.) This was a dream that I had in my youth; one day I hoped that I'd be able to see one of our Presidents in person. And on Friday, last Friday, I was sitting in the science and I was taking my test, and my English teacher -- he came in, he said, go to the office when you're finished.

I stopped then -- oh, what did I do now? (Laughter.) So I went in the office and she said, "Sit down, Hattie." I sit down. She says, "The teachers have chosen you to be in the room with the President." And when she said that I'd like to pass out. (Laughter.) Oh, this is wonderful -- something I'd been wanting to do for years. And I just thank the Lord for being here. And listening to your speech on the radio, I knew that you were a God-sent man because every time you would say something you would say God -- by the help of God we will make it. And soon I realized that we will make it. We have a good President and we'll back you up, and I know we'll make it. (Applause.)

And I was a dropout in 1945, right -- so I come back in 1992, right? So this year I'll be graduating with my diploma, 1993. (Applause.)

The President: Anybody else want to say anything?

Q I do, I do. (Laughter.)

Q On behalf of the New Jersey Youth Corps it's my pleasure to give you this as a token of thanks for caring so much about the youth of America today. (Applause.)

Q It's my pleasure to have you here, not only because you're the President but because you're a President we all like. (Laughter.) And I just wanted to ask you one question. As a minority student in the United States I have experience of some kind of prejudice in the country and how we have to struggle a little bit harder than everyone else. And I just wanted to ask you -- wanted to tell you that all this that you're doing is great, especially for Hispanics, Latinos, blacks -- we all recognize how you're trying to make it seem that this is not only a white country anymore, but all a mixture of all different cultures.

And one of the groups that I've seen that has not been seen and they are a minority group, and there has not been putting any attention toward the handicapped people. And I think that I wanted to ask you that -- are you thinking of doing anything for them, because I think that they're there and we should put some kind of value to them and some kind importance. I'm very close to one family that they have experienced with their handicapped child many different problems. And one of the things was the Reagan administration, they always had been cutting down on those

programs, especially for the handicapped. And they had to have been placed in different schools, which is not appropriate for handicapped people. And they have, you know, have many problems because it's not where they should be. Do you plan to do anything for them?

The President: Yes, I'm glad you brought that up. Let's talk about two or three things. Let me say, first of all, a lot of people with disabilities have problems that aren't easy to solve, as you know. But they also have enormous potential to contribute to this country. I can make the same argument for people with disabilities I made for all of you -- that it is in our interest to see that everyone develops to the maximum of his or her capacity and serve to the maximum of his or her capacity.

Let me just mention two or three things. Number one, last year before I became President, the Congress passed -- Congress passed and President Bush signed a bill called the Americans For Disabilities Act. It has not been fully implemented. One of the commitments I made in this campaign is to try to bring that law to life for Americans with disabilities. It provides all kinds of extra effort to make America accessible and to invest in the potential of people with disabilities.

The second thing is, I hope that a lot of these service programs will involve special services to people with disabilities, working toward independence, not dependence. There are a lot of government programs now which if you know someone with disabilities, you know it's basically -- it favors funding that is designed almost to keep disabled people dependent instead of independent. And more and more disabled people want to and are able to, given technological supports, to live on their own, to work on their own, to live and at least assist in living environments. And this is a very big deal for me and for my administration.

My Domestic Policy Advisor has a child whom I've known since he was a little boy who had cerebral palsy and is now living out on his own in an assisted-living environment. And he will soon get his high school diploma. So I believe in that.

The third thing I would say is we're going to do a lot of work through the Department of Education to try to make sure that children get appropriate placements and at least have the chance that they need to get a public education.

I don't know if you've noticed this, but not this Saturday, the Saturday before last I did a little town meeting like this with children. And there was a nine-year-old child with cerebral palsy who was very eloquent on the show. And she said she had a twin sister who was also in a wheelchair, but her twin sister couldn't speak except with the use of a computer, which is not uncommon. And she said because she could speak, she was in a regular classroom; because her sister had to use the computer to speak, she was in a special ed classroom. And she felt that they had the same mental capacity.

So she said "Can you help get my sister in my classroom?" And I asked -- it was an interesting thing to question I asked her, I said, "Would you, if your sister couldn't do the work, would you then favor her getting special assistance?" And she said, yes. And I said, "What you really want is for your sister just to have a chance to do what you do?" And she said, that's what I want. I just want her to have a chance. It was very moving.

But a lot of schools and school districts are just now learning what they can do. And we're always learning more and more about proper placements of these children. So anyway, those are some of things that I will work on for persons with disabilities. (Applause.)

I appreciate the other comment you made, because I am trying to demonstrate to the American people that we are all one country. We have to live together not only with tolerance for one another, but with absolute appreciation for one another's differences. We shouldn't just put up with one another; we should actually enjoy the fact that this is a country of people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

When you look at what's going on today in the former Yugoslavia with the ethnic hatred -- the Serbs and the Croats and the Bosnian-Muslims shooting and killing each other and starving each other with differences -- cultural and historic differences that are deep and long-lasting, but at least to the naked eye not near as different as the cultural differences represented just in this room -- for all of the problems we have in this country, we are moving forward on that.

And I really believe that a great test of whether we will go into the next century and maintain our position as the greatest and strongest nation in the world may well be whether we can learn to live together across racial and ethnic lines and not just put up with one another, but absolutely enjoy the fact and make the most of it.

One of our counties -- Los Angeles County in California -- has 150 different racial and ethnic groups within one county. I once spoke at a **university** there that had students from 122 different countries.

This can be an enormous strength of us in a world that is getting smaller and smaller and smaller. If you look around this room, the fact that some of you can come from such different cultures is a very big positive in a world that's getting smaller. The fact that we have a huge Hispanic population, for example, will be an enormous asset to us as more and more of our trade goes to Mexico, Central America, and South America to try to build up their economy. That's just one example.

If you look at the fact that we have a substantial Asian population, it can be an enormous strength to us with the fastest growing economies in the world being in Asia. There are lots of examples. The fact that we have a big African American population will be an enormous strength to us when 20 years from now we might find out that Africa then has the fastest growing economy in the world if they can solve some of their political problems.

So America is in an incredible position to have another great century as a nation if we can learn to really build on the strength of our diversity.

Oh, yes. I want you all to be -- you've been invited to ride a bus over to the speech. And I'm going to go with you. (Applause.) Ready?

Q Mr. President, I have a question before you go if you don't mind. (Laughter.) It's not directly related to this event. But if you could, I know the American public is really

interested in knowing what is going on with the World Trade Center explosion. Was it a terrorist incident?

The President: I'm not in a position to say that now. And I don't mean because I know something that I'm not telling you. I think you know that there was severe structural damage done to the World Trade Center. And as I think Governor Cuomo has already announced, you know the federal and state and local people have been working together ever since the incident occurred. It took a substantial amount of time just to get people down in the crater that the bomb made to begin the analysis.

I can tell you this -- that we have put full, full resources -- the federal law enforcement agencies, all kinds of agencies, all kinds of access to information at the service of those who are working to figure out who did this and why and what the facts are. But I cannot answer your question yet.

Q Mr. President, on national service, you campaigned on the promise that anybody who wanted to go to school could go and then repay their loans in national service. I think in your economic plan under investment there's \$3 billion allotted for national service.

The President: More now.

Q Which would not be enough to provide this to everyone. How long would it take to phase it in? And do you think that you're not really fulfilling your campaign promise?

The President: No. As a matter of fact, we are --in the campaign, we only talked about making it available as an option. We talked about making it available for everybody to pay off their loans as a percentage of their income; and then the funding of national service slots will be college graduates. That's all we talked about in the campaign. Now, we're actually going to start funding slots for people before they go to high school. And we think we'll start -- we think we'll have 35,000 of them, which is twice as many people as were ever in the Peace Corps in any given year, in addition to those coming out of college.

What we don't know, and we may have to modify the funding I asked for from Congress over the next four years, but it is impossible to know how many people will choose the service option. So the funding we asked for is based on our best available effort to estimate how many people will choose the service option. All the students will be able to choose to pay their loans back as a percentage of their income immediately. And we think we'll be able to accommodate over the next four years, everybody who chooses the service option. We think we will.

But we have to build it up a little in the first year or two so we learn how to do it. There has been a pilot project going, as you probably know, under legislation that was sponsored in the previous Congress by, I think, Senator Nunn, Senator Wofford -- and others. And we're going to expand it just as quickly as we can, and we're going to do our level best, once we get the system worked out over the next year or so, to make service available to everybody who wants it. We think their numbers are about right. We think we have funded it about the level of maximum participation for college graduates. But we're adding on pre-college students, which we think is a good thing. This is something I had not planned to do basically until I kept seeing

programs like the La Conservation Corps, City Year, programs like the ones the young people are involved in here.

Q Are you concerned, sir, that it may become a kind of a new entitlement, that it will grow beyond the ability fund and out of control?

The President: No, if we can't fund it, we'll just have to -- we'll have to -- the entitlement will be access to a loan you can pay back based on a percentage of your income, which will be a huge -- we're going to strengthen collection procedures, cut defaults, cut the cost of administering the program until we can fund a lot of that.

The service issue cannot become an entitlement. If all of a sudden in one year a million people want to convert from a loan to service, we won't be able to afford that. But based on the experiences we have seen in the past, we think that this will be by far the biggest service program in the history of America. And we think we'll be able to take everybody who will choose the service option. We're just going on historical precedence now. We think we can more than fund the people who will choose the service option in the first four years. If they don't, I would consider going back. But we can't let that become an absolute entitlement.

Q -- economic aid, sir, to New York, and are you prepared to do that? Governor Cuomo has asked for it.

The President: We are processing -- this morning, I got a report on that. And it's my understanding that we are going through the regular agencies and that the request will be processed promptly. I don't think that there is any problem with the request that he made as far as I understand it. And we're giving that a high priority.

Q Mr. President, why did you choose **Rutgers** for this announcement? And what impressed you about their community service program here?

The President: I chose **Rutgers** because, first of all, the **university** was involved in this facility and because I want to keep highlighting adult education, education of welfare recipients, education of kids that drop out of school, and because I like this New Jersey Youth Program here. Under Governor Florio's administration they started, I think, 9, 10, 11 of these. Something like that. And I want to encourage -- again, I do not want this to be a bureaucratic program. I want to encourage kind of an entrepreneurial spirit out there at the state and local level. I want states to be encouraged to set up youth corps. I want comprehensive community service centers like this to be able to get people doing national service.

So I wanted to come here to say I really appreciate what these folks are doing, but also to give the rest of America an idea of what we mean by community service, what we mean by national service, and how it can embrace people of different ages and different backgrounds with different needs; because it's very important that to make this work, we're going to have to rely on the creativity of people at the grassroots level. And the last thing I want is another centralized bureaucracy telling people how to serve.

As I said, right now, the only decisions we have made for categories of service that have to be approved in every state are

in the area of police and teaching, because we know as a practical matter we need more community policing in high-crime areas where we can reduce crime and work with kids and not just be there after it happens. And we know we need more teachers in a lot of core areas to reduce the student-teacher ratio and increase learning.

So we've done that. But otherwise, this program is not going to have a huge set of national requirements or bureaucracy.

Q Mr. President, how closely, if at all, did you work with Senator Bradley's neighborhood corps bill?

The President: We reviewed it very closely. That's why we invited -- I think he's going to meet us over at **Rutgers** today. I was very impressed by it. And as a matter fact, I had a personal conversation with him about it. That's one of the reasons we wanted to come up here, too. And I invited him to come today, and I think he's going to be over there.

Q Mr. President, do you fear that a fear of terrorism in America might change the way of life that most Americans have, if this bombing proves to be terrorism?

The President: I certainly hope not. We've been very blessed in this country to have been free of the kind of terrorist activity that has gripped other countries. Even a country like Great Britain, that has a much lower general crime rate, has more of that sort of activity because of the political problems it has been involved in.

I don't want the American people to overreact to this at this time. I can tell you, I have put the -- I will reiterate -- I have put the full resources of the federal government, every conceivable law enforcement information resource we could put to work on this we have. I'm very concerned about it.

But I think it's also important that we not overreact to it. After all, sometimes when an incident like this happens, people try to claim credit for it who didn't do it, and if sometimes if folks like that can get you to stop doing what you're doing, they've won half the battle. If they get you ruffled, if they get us to change the way we live and what we do, that's half the battle.

So I can't give -- I would discourage the American people from overreacting to this. It's a very serious thing. And I'm heartbroken for the people who were killed and their families and those who were injured. There was some significant business disruptions, too, as you probably know and as I'm afraid we'll find out more about in the next day or two, just by shutting down the World Trade Center and all the activities that go on there. But I plead with the American people and the good people of New York to right now keep your courage up, go on about your lives. And we're working as hard as we can to get to the bottom of this.

Q I just first want to say that when I saw you on video when you were first running for office, you had a clip of how you met President Kennedy at Boys Nation. And I, too, was at Girls Nation in 1990, when I was a junior in high school. But I didn't have the fortunate chance of meeting President Bush. But I am just very thankful that I could meet a President, especially one who I can support.

But besides that, I would like to thank **Rutgers** and my

college -- I'm a sophomore -- for giving us the opportunity to meet with you today and instill a lot of hope in New Jersey and everyone else who watches this, because if people see the importance in helping one another, I think that's the only way our nation will become stronger. It's investing and reinvesting in our nation. And if people don't come outside of themselves and help one another there's no way that we will move forward in life. So I'm very happy that you're here today because I think that people will now see how important it is for us to help one another. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Q The National Rifle Association right now in New Jersey is actively seeking to overturn the assault weapons ban that Governor Florio put on the books in 1990. They say if they're successful, then no other state will be able to enact rigid gun control and that you'll have a very tough time getting the Brady bill through Congress. Are you concerned about that?

The President: I think Governor Florio is right. And I'm going to sure try to pass the Brady bill. I think Americans who want safer streets and still want people to be able to hunt and fish and pursue their sporting activities should take a lot of heart in the success that Governor Wilder had in Virginia recently. And Virginia it has become a source, as you know, of weapons for a lot of illegal activity all up and down the Atlantic seaboard. And they've gone to that once-a-month limitation on the purchase of guns.

I think -- you know, we can't be so fixated on our desire to preserve the rights of ordinary Americans to legitimately own handguns and rifles -- it's something I strongly support -- we can't be so fixated on that that we are unable to think about the reality of life that millions of Americans face on streets that are unsafe, under conditions that no other nation -- no other nations -- has permitted to exist. And at some point I still hope that the leadership of the National Rifle Association will go back to doing what it did when I was a boy and which made me want to be a lifetime member because they put out valuable information about hunting and marksmanship and safe use of guns. But just to know of the conditions we face today in a lot of our cities and other places in this country and the enormous threat to public safety is amazing.

I've got young Americans now in Somalia trying to create conditions of peaceful existence there in a country where it is difficult, but there are a lot of young Americans who are living in neighborhoods today that are about as dangerous or worse than what kids are facing in Somalia in terms of shots. Not in terms of hunger and access to medicine and shelter -- that's different.

But I have to tell you I think that Governor Florio did a gutsy thing here. I think Governor Wilder did a brave thing. I had my own encounters back home in Arkansas, and I just hope to be able to pass the Brady bill and do some other sensible things that do not unduly infringe on the right of the law-abiding citizen to keep and bear arms, but will help make these children's future safer. And I think we ought to do that.

Q Do you think that the NRA's contributing to that threat that you just talked about because it is opposing these gun control measures?

The President: Well, I don't want to get into character. I think that it is an error for them to oppose every attempt to

bring some safety and some rationality into the way we handle some of the most serious criminal problems we have. And these things do not unduly affect the right to keep and bear arms. It's not going to kill anybody to wait a couple of days to get a handgun while we do a background check on somebody that wants to buy a gun.

I have a lot of -- I have personal experience with this. I live in a state where half the people have a hunting or a fishing license. I know somebody who once sold a weapon to a person who went out and killed a bunch of people because he was an escapee from a mental hospital. And the guy liked to never got over it. And if he had just had a law where he was supposed to wait two or three days to check, they would have found that out.

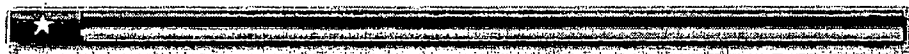
That is a -- I know that happens. I don't believe that everybody in America needs to be able to buy a semiautomatic or an automatic weapon -- built only for the purpose of killing people -- in order to protect the right of Americans to hunt and to practice marksmanship and to be secure in their own homes and own a weapon to be secure. I just don't believe that.

So I hope that is a debate that will continue. And I think, as I said, what Governor Florio did and what Governor Wilder did, I think will contribute to Americans facing this and trying to reconcile our absolute obligation under the Constitution to give people the right to handle a firearm responsibly and our obligation to try to preserve peace and keep these kids alive in our cities.

The Press: Thank you.

End

12:12 P.M. Est



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White House Press Release
In Signing Ceremony Of The National Service Bill

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 21, 1993

Remarks By The President
In Signing Ceremony Of The National Service Bill

The South Lawn

11:15 A.M. Edt

The President: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. I always wanted to be introduced by the host of the David Letterman Show. (Laughter.)

I was thinking about what my Top 10 List would be -- the best things about having Al Gore as Vice President. (Laughter and applause.) He educates me on things great and trivial. (Laughter.) And that's 10, and numbers nine through one are: He has a vote in the United States Senate. (Laughter and applause.) He said, and I'm always on the winning side when I vote. (Laughter.)

I want to welcome you all to America's backyard, a fitting place to come to celebrate the opportunity to serve our neighbors and the opportunity to rebuild the American community. I have harbored this dream for years. It was stoked in me by so many thousands of experiences I cannot even recall them all.

When the Vice President and I went across this country last year, I was deeply moved by forces that were both good and bad that kept pushing me to believe that this was more important than so many other things that all of us do in public life. I saw the wreckage, the insanity, the lost human potential that you can find now not only in our biggest cities, but in every community. And yet, I saw even in the most difficult circumstances the light in the eyes of so many young people; the courage, the hunger for life; the desire to do something to reach beyond themselves and to reach out to others and to make things better.

I listened and learned from so many people. I saw the examples of the service programs that you have represented here on this stage. I watched people's dreams come to life. I watched the old and the young relate in ways they hadn't. I watched mean streets turn into safer and better and more humane places. I saw all these things happening, and I realized that there was no way any government program could solve these problems even if we had the money to spend on them, which we don't, but that the American people, if organized and directed and challenged and asked, would find a way.

I am in debt to so many people, all of whom have been at least referred to. But I would like to say a particular word of thanks to those who sponsored previous legislation for a limited basis. I want to say a special word of thanks to the Republicans and the Democrats who joined together in the Congress to make sure that this would know no party and that we would somehow reach beyond the normal debate and dialogue to unify this country, starting with the Congress.

I thank the people who helped me before I became President to understand more about national service -- the people who wrote books and articles, the people who worked with me in the Dlc and other organizations. I thank all of you because all of you played a role in this day.

But most of all, I want to thank the young people of this country who were so wonderfully represented by these three young people -- Richard and Derrick and Pricilla. Weren't they terrific? Let's give them another hand. (Applause.)

I don't believe there was a stop on our bus tour across the country when the Vice President and I didn't mention our commitment to national service as a part of our drive to make college education affordable to all, but also as a part of our deeper desire to bring the American community back together. (Applause.)

I have to say a special word of appreciation to Eli Segal. (Applause.) I have known him for about half my lifetime. I can still remember when we were young with the dreams and the enthusiasms that these young people on this stage have today. I could not have known when we first met in our attempt to do the best we could by our country so long ago that someday we would be standing here on this stage to do this. But I know this: This national service bill and this project would not be in the form it is and we would not be here celebrating today in the way we are if it had not been for his brilliant, dedicated leadership. And I thank him for that. (Applause.)

Relying on the ancient adage that if it ain't broke, don't fix it, I am today forwarding to Senator Kennedy and the United States Senate the nomination of Eli Segal to be the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service. (Applause.)

I also want to acknowledge, as has already been referred to, the roots of our history in all this day and people who have contributed to this day because of what they did in their time. Twice before in this century Americans have been called to great adventures in civilian service. Sixty years ago, in the depths of the Depression, Franklin Roosevelt created the CCC and gave Americans the chance not only to do meaningful work so that they could feed themselves and their families, but so that they could build America for the future. And down to this day there is not a state in this country that is untouched by the continuing impact of the good work done by the people who labored in the CCC. (Applause.)

Today we have two veterans of President Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps -- William Bailey and Owen Davis. Would they please stand wherever they are? (Applause.) There they are. Thank you. (Applause.)

It is with special pride that I will use President Franklin Roosevelt's pen set, with which he signed nearly every piece of legislation as President, to sign our bill here today.

We also point with pride, as the Vice President said, to the enduring legacy and the continued vitality of John Kennedy's Peace Corps, created by legislation which President Kennedy signed 32 years ago tomorrow. I want to acknowledge, as the Vice President did, the wonderful work of Sergeant Shriver not only as the first director and guiding spirit of the Peace Corps, but for what he did with the Vista program. And I want to acknowledge -- (Applause) -- thank you -- and to say with some pride that it was my privilege, influenced by people like the Vice President whose sister served with such distinction in the Peace Corps, to appoint the first Peace Corps volunteer to actually direct the Peace Corps, Carol Bellamy. And I thank her for her leadership. (Applause.)

Thanks to the generosity of Sergeant Shriver, I will also use the pen President Kennedy used 30 years ago -- 32 years ago -- to sign the Peace Corps legislation to create a new national service corp for America. We will call it **AmeriCorp**. (Applause.)

When I asked our country's young people to give something back to our country through grass-roots service, they responded by the thousands. You heard a couple of them here today. Eli's office was literally swamped with letters asking to serve. These two young people today represent 20,000 young people next year, and 100,000 young people three years from now,. And I hope, believe and dream that national service will remain throughout the life of America not a series of promises, but a series of challenges, across all the generations and all walks of life to help us to rebuild our troubled but wonderful land. I hope that some day the success of this program will make it possible for every young American who wishes to serve and earn credit against a college education, or other kinds of education and training, to do that. And I believe it will happen.

This morning our Cabinet and the heads of our federal agencies were directed to redouble their efforts to use service -- community grass-roots service -- to accomplish their fundamental missions. We want them to help reinvent our government to do more and cost less by creating new ways for citizens to fulfill the mission of the public. We believe we can do that. Already departments have enlisted young people and not-so-young people to do everything from flood cleanup to housing rehabilitation; from being tour guides in our national parks to being teachers' aides in our schools.

In the coming months we will also challenge states and nonprofit organizations to compete for **AmeriCorp** volunteers. We'll ask our friends in higher education and the foundation world and in business to continue their leadership in the growing movement of national service.

But beyond the concrete achievements of **AmeriCorp**, beyond the expanded educational opportunities those achievements will earn, national service, I hope and pray, will help us to strengthen the cords that bind us together as a people; will help us to remember in the quiet of every night that what each of us can become is to

some extent determined by whether all of us can become what God meant us to be. (Applause.)

And I hope it will remind every American that there can be no opportunity without responsibility. The great English historian, Edward Gibbon, warned that when the Athenians finally wanted not to give to society, but for society to give to them, when the freedom they wished for most was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free.

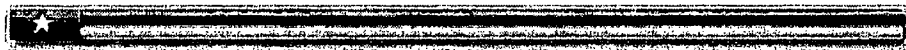
My fellow Americans, there are streets and neighborhoods and communities today where people are not free. There are millions of Americans who are not really free today, because they cannot reach down inside them and bring out what was put there by the Almighty. This National Service Corps should send a loud and clear message across this country that the young people of America will preserve the freedom of America for themselves and for all those of their generations by assuming the responsibility to rebuild the American family. That is the dream which drove this idea to the reality we find today.

I am so proud of all of you who are a part of this. I am profoundly grateful to you. I ask you only now to remember that as we move toward the 21st century, the success of our great voyage, of this, the longest experiment in free society in human history -- to remember that it is at the grass roots, in the heart of every citizen that we will succeed or fail. Today we are taking a stand in this country for the proposition that if we challenge people to serve and we give them a chance to fulfill their abilities, more and more and more we will all understand that we must go forward together. This is the profoundest lesson of this whole endeavor. And it will be the great legacy of the wonderful people who make it come alive.

Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

End

11:34 A.M. Edt



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White House Press Release

Radio Address By The President To The Nation

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 11, 1993

Radio Address By The President To The Nation

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. Est

The President: Good morning.

This morning I want to talk to you about crime and violence and what we can all do about it.

On Tuesday evening in Garden City, New York, a gunman shot and killed five rush hour commuters on the Long Island Railroad, and wounded 20 others.

On Thursday night in California, there was a memorial service for 12-year old Polly Klaas. She'd been kidnapped from her bedroom two months ago. Her little body was found last Saturday.

These tragedies are part of the epidemic of violence that has left Americans insecure on our streets, in our schools, even in our homes. The crime rate has hit every American community from our oldest cities to our smallest towns to our newest suburbs.

As a suburban California woman, the mother of a 10-year old girl, said a few days ago, "There's no safe place to go. There's no place that's safe."

If our nation is to find any meaning in these tragedies, we must join together to end this epidemic of violent crime and restore the fabric of civilized life in every community. There is now some hope amidst the horror because decent people are fighting back against crime.

Just before Thanksgiving I signed the Brady Bill into law. It requires a five-day waiting period before anyone can purchase a handgun so there can be a check of someone's age, mental

health and criminal record. The Brady bill became law because you, the American people, were stronger than the gun lobby.

On Thursday, together with Attorney General Janet Reno, FBI Director Louis Freeh and Drug Policy Coordinator Lee Brown, I met with mayors and police chiefs from 35 cities. They told me they need more police on the streets, a ban on assault weapons and action to keep drugs and guns away from vulnerable young people. And I intend to give the folks on the front lines the resources and the support they need to win the fight against crime.

I call upon Congress when they return in January to pass promptly a strong crime bill that will put 100,000 more police officers on the street, prohibit assault weapons and provide fundings for more boot camps for first-time offenders.

I want to put 100,000 new police officers on the streets of our communities so they can walk their beats and work with neighborhood people. Putting more police on the streets will do more to reduce crime than anything else we can do.

The ban on assault weapons and the restrictions on semi-automatics are important because they'll stop criminal gangs from being better armed than the police. And these restrictions would have prevented the gunman on the Long Island Railroad from having two 15-round clips of ammunition that enabled him to maim and kill so many people with such deadly speeds. Assault weapons and 15-round clips have nothing to do with hunting or sports. They just let criminals shoot people more quickly. A recent study in one of our major cities showed that the increasing death rate among young people hit with gunshots was due almost entirely to the fact that the weapons themselves were more likely to be semi-automatic and, therefore, more deadly.

Boot camps have been endorsed by every major law enforcement organization in America. They give first offenders a second chance to learn some discipline. And they open more space in the prisons for hardened, violent criminals.

Now that Congress is home for the holidays, tell your senators and representatives to pass a strong crime bill so your family can be safer. You know, the new year begins just three weeks from today. I'd like to suggest a new year's resolution for every senator and every representative: let's pass the crime bill as soon as you return.

There's so much more we're doing and more we need to do. Under the leadership of Dr. Lee Brown, our drug policy director and the father of community policing, we're strengthening enforcement and prevention. We're increasing the focus on hard core users who fuel the crime and violence and the tragic waste of human lives.

Next summer, in our National Service program, **AmeriCorps**, thousands of young people will help with community policing, escort older people and board up abandoned buildings so they can't be turned into crack houses. The young people in the Summer of Safety will be an inspiring example for Americans of all ages to work together to make our streets safer by acting on our finest values.

Let's face it -- drugs and guns and violence fill a vacuum where the values of civilized life used to be. Work and family and community are the principles, the institutions, upon which the great majority of Americans are building their lives. We need to restore them, and the sense of hope and discipline that will give

every man and woman, every boy and girl the opportunity to become the people God intended them to be.

In recent weeks, I've spoken to leaders from the religious community and the entertainment community about the obligation we all share to fight violence with values. Last week I was proud to hear that the Inner City Broadcasting Corporation of New York, which owns five radio stations throughout the country, will no longer play songs that advocate violence or show contempt for women. And I understand that two stations in Los Angeles -- Kace, owned by former Green Bay Packer Willie Davis and Kjlh, owned by Stevie Wonder -- have also adopted this policy.

Whether we're ministers or moviemakers, businesspeople or broadcasters, teachers or parents, we can all set our sons and daughters on a better path in life so they can learn and love and lead decent and productive lives.

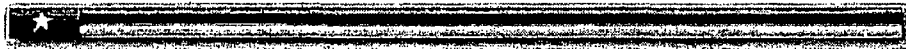
In this holiday season, as we rejoice in the love of our families and hold our children a little closer, we should also strengthen the bonds of community. We can make our neighborhoods and our nations places of shared responsibility, not random violence. The tragedies of this week remind us that there is no place to hide. The lessons of our history remind us that Americans can accomplish anything when we work together for a common purpose.

As we begin this season of celebration and rededication, let's remember the words of Theodore Roosevelt, a great president who was once a police commissioner, too: "This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in, unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in."

Thanks for listening and God bless you all.

End

10:12 A.M. Est



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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 24, 1997

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT CLINTON
FORMER PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH ,
GENERAL COLIN POWELL, AND SECRETARY HENRY CISNEROS
IN NATIONAL SERVICE SUMMIT ANNOUNCEMENT

The East Room

2:52 P.M. EST

I thank the Vice President and the First Lady for their remarks. Obviously, I am delighted to have President Bush, General Powell, and Secretary Cisneros back. Henry's only been off the payroll a day or two. (Laughter.) I didn't really know if he'd come. (Laughter.)

I thank so many people here who have advocated national service and citizen service of various kinds for a long time. Especially I'd like to acknowledge, in addition to Harris Wofford and Bob Goodwin, Eli Segal and Ray Chambers; Al From with the Democratic Leadership Council; Charles Moskos, the national scholar of citizen service, who was for all this years before the rest of us knew it was an issue. Thank you, sir, for all your lifetime of work devoted to the proposition that the American people can forge their own destiny and solve their own problems. We thank you.

This is an extraordinary collection of Americans who have gathered here, not only on the stage but out here in the room, to advance the cause of citizen service. Much of the work of America cannot be done by government. Much other work cannot be done by government alone. The solution must be the American people through voluntary service to others.

The challenges we face today, especially those that face our children, require something of all of us -- parents, religious and community groups, business, labor organizations, schools, teachers, our great national civic and service organizations, every citizen.

One of my proudest moments as President was signing the bill creating the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps. During the last three years, about 50,000 Americans have earned aid for college by serving in their communities, doing real work to address critical problems, cleaning up rivers, working with the police to make the streets safe, helping children

learn to read, and doing many, many more things in every state in the country.

These AmeriCorps members and even larger numbers of Senior Service Corps and student volunteers have really helped to revive the spirit of service in America. I noticed just a few days before the Inauguration the publication of a national poll -- I can mention that now and you think I have not self-interest, you see -- (laughter) -- the publication of a national poll that said that young people are serving in their communities in far higher percentages than just a few years ago.

I think is a culmination of years and years of effort. When President Bush held this office, he understood that so much of what is good in America has to be done, and is being done, by people who are outside Washington and outside the federal government. And we share his hope that by holding up examples of ordinary Americans engaged in extraordinary service, by holding up those 1,000 Points of Light, they will grow by the power of their example into millions of points of light. And we thank you for that. (Applause.)

Citizen service belongs to no party, no ideology. It is an American idea which every American should embrace. Today I am pleased to announce that we are taking an important step to give more Americans the opportunity to fulfill that promise.

On April 27th, in Philadelphia, with the support and leadership of the Corporation For National Service, the Points Of Light Foundation, General Colin Powell and Secretary Henry Cisneros, President Bush and I will convene the first President's Summit On Citizen Service. Our goal is to mobilize America's citizen power in a united effort to solve our common problems, especially those that threaten our young people.

Leaders from a broad spectrum will come with commitments in hand, concrete pledges of support and volunteers to solve their local problems. In preparation for the summit some of our most prominent corporations and service organizations have already stepped forward. Big Brothers-Big Sisters has pledged to double their mentoring relations, matching 200,000 deserving young people with caring adults through the 2000. And they have pledged to compound their efforts by having these adult volunteers actually do other citizen service projects with the young people they mentor. They not only will be serving the young, but calling on the young to serve.

Lens Crafters will provide one million needy Americans, especially children, with free vision care by the year 2003. Columbia HCA, a leading health care company, has committed to immunize one million children through their health care facilities by the year 2000. And that is just the beginning.

I am delighted that General Colin Powell, who has served our country in so very many ways, has agreed to serve once again, this time as general chair of the summit.

General, we're grateful that you're joining us. And I remember well when you had your retirement ceremony, you said that you were going to devote more of your life to helping young

people to have better lives and better futures. There is nothing, nothing you could do that would have a bigger impact on that goal than this. And we are very grateful to you, sir. (Applause.)

All of you know that I believe Henry Cisneros is the finest HUD Secretary who ever served our country. He had a special way of getting people to take responsibility for their own lives of generating real interpersonal human contacts in places where they had been too long absent. He just has a great new leadership job at Univision, and I am very grateful that he was willing to take substantial time out of an already very busy schedule in a new and fulfilling in some ways more rewarding life -- (laughter) -- to do what I know he loves best, which is to help people realize their own promise. Thank you, Henry, for doing that. (Applause.)

Finally, let me say I am deeply honored to be embarking on this joint venture with President Bush. As far as I know, there's not much of a precedent for this sort of thing, at least in recent history, but there should be. It must be true that the things which unite us as citizens are bigger than any one person, one party, one election, or one ideology. They can only be solved if we come together in partnership to lift each other up -- a person at a time, a family at a time, a neighborhood at a time, a school at a time.

The organizers of this effort have wisely chosen Philadelphia as the site of the summit, for the reasons that the Vice President said.

I'm reminded at the close of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin made an observation about a design of the sun that was hanging low on the horizon in the chair that General Washington sat in to preside over the Convention. And after the Constitutional Convention was over, he said there had been a lot of speculation about whether it was a rising or a setting sun; having seen the Constitution he could say that it was definitely a rising sun.

I believe we can look at this assemblage today, look forward to Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and say this is a rising sun.

I thank all of you. I thank especially those who are here on this platform. And I'd like to ask all of you to join me as we hear from our speakers. First, President Bush; to be followed by General Powell and Henry Cisneros.

Mr. President, welcome back. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, all. Mr. President, thank you, sir. (Applause.) Thank you all very much. Mr. President, thank you, sir, and Hillary -- Mrs. Clinton, our First Lady, for this wonderful welcome back and for your extraordinarily kind and overly generous remarks.

Of course, I'm pleased to be here, joining the President, Colin Powell -- my old dear friend, comrade-in-arms, you might say -- and, of course, Henry Cisneros, who I knew before most of you did, back when he was the Mayor of San Antonio -- to salute all on this Summit on Volunteerism. Of course, we have here volunteer organizations. And I wish I could single out every single one of them, every single individual who's volunteering.

Mr. President, I hope that our joining together, the fact that our predecessors and their spouses -- previous Presidents have also indicated support for this summit, sends a simple and a strong message. And that is that when it comes to addressing many of the problems we face as a nation, it isn't a question of partisan politics, of one side against another, it's a question of all pulling together for the common good.

And during the four previous that I was privileged to serve in this magnificent house, one of the most rewarding experiences that I had was meeting with the different groups, thousands of people, who got involved in their communities and helped to make them better places to live -- senior citizens monitoring school kids in Texas, or a local foundation offering medical services to at-risk families in Ohio; then there was a homeless shelter in California. And every day, it was a different story, from a different place, but the premise was always the same -- somebody cared and somebody acted.

The point is, after all the stories, you realize there isn't a problem that we face in America that isn't being solved by someone somewhere -- and that's drug abuse or illiteracy -- volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life are claiming society's problems as their own and they're making a difference. They're literally changing our country. And, of course, each of cares about these issues. The difference is volunteers take the next step. And not only do they care, they roll up their sleeves and they do something about it.

The challenge we face today, then, is getting more people to take that next step. And this is what the Philadelphia Summit On Volunteerism is all about. It's about citizens pulling together and leading by example and lifting lives.

And, Mr. President, as we all remember, you touched on this in your inaugural address on Monday. The President spoke of a new sense of responsibility and a new spirit of community. And such is our purpose today.

And I'm very pleased to join in this unique effort. Already we've got a great team coming together. I see my fellow Houstonian, Phil Carroll, over here with Shel. Shel has made a corporate-wide commitment -- I just singled him out, we could talk of others -- a corporate-wide commitment to support all five goals of the summit -- this emphasis on helping kids, young people -- through expanded employee volunteering, through targeted corporate philanthropy and promotional support.

And so many others are joining in this effort under the profoundly capable leadership of Colin, helped by Henry. And, of course, Ray Chambers, Mr. Volunteer. He really has assumed - - for me, at least -- the mantle of George Romney, who devoted the last years of his life to that, to nothing else but volunteerism.

So, Mr. President, I'm very proud to be a part of this and proud to be at your side in this noble effort. Thank you, sir. (Applause.)

GENERAL POWELL: Mr. President, Mrs. Clinton, President Bush, Vice President Gore, and my friend of 30 years duration, Henry Cisneros. It's a great pleasure for me to be here this afternoon and to be a part of this program as the general chairman for the summit, but not only for the summit but for the follow-on program that will come after the summit. Because this isn't just one event, a flash in the pan. This is something we're going to be building on in the years ahead, so that when the turn of the century comes, the things we're talking about here today will have taken on concrete forms and we're going to see positive results from our efforts.

Americans are a caring and compassionate people. We show our compassion in many ways. We show our compassion in what we do for the members of our own family and our extended family. We show our compassion in what we expect our government to do for those of our fellow citizens who are in need.

But most importantly, we show our compassion in an extraordinary way -- in the volunteer efforts of Americans around the country. We're the most generous country with respect to what we do for each other. We are a philanthropic nation. But we need to do more. We need to do a lot more. Because the need is so great. Because at this time in our nation's history, there are many people, and especially many, many young people, who are in despair, who are wondering if the American Dream is there for them, who are wondering whether anyone cares, will anyone come around to touch my life, to make my life a little better.

And the answer we give today, and the answer we will give in the summit, and the answer we will give in the years that follow is, yes, your fellow Americans care.

We're not asking for a government program. We're not looking for an appropriation. We're looking to scale up and leverage up all the wonderful programs that are underway around the country, whether it's the Boys and Girls Clubs, or Big Brothers and Big Sisters, or Children's Health Fund, or the Urban League, or all the other programs that are represented here today. We've got to scale them up; we've got to leverage them up.

Because the solution to the problems that affect our young people, and the solution to the problems that affect other of our fellow citizens who are in need is for us to do something about it. We have divides in our country of a social, economic and racial nature. Those divides must be bridged by efforts such as the one we are undertaking today. And I'm so very, very proud and honored to have been asked to play a role in this.

President Clinton and I had a conversation in the Oval Office a few years ago while I was still Chairman. And the President remarked on the quality of the young men and women in uniform that he saw as he went about his duties. And we got to musing about how we were able to do that. And in our musing we said, you know, these young men and women that we bring in from all over the country, look what we do for them. We give them a safe and secure place to be. We put structure in their life. We give them role models. We give them leaders to look up to. We give them health care. We make sure that they are taken care of. And then we ask them, in return, to give us service.

If only we could take that model and make it available to every youngster in the country. And that's what we're starting out to do today. And that will be the focus of the summit in Philadelphia.

So this is a great adventure. I look forward to it. I'd like to thank those corporations and organizations who are here present today who have already made a positive commitment. And I specially want to thank the gentlemen who have already been introduced who have been working on this effort for the last few years, and especially Ray Chambers, who I think has been the spark plug behind it all.

This is about volunteerism. This is about Americans getting off the sidelines and getting onto the playing field. This is about each and every one of us who have been blessed by the wealth of this country sharing that blessing by reaching down and reaching back and lifting up somebody in need. That's what America is all about; that's what being American is all about.

So I'm proud to be part of this effort. I am especially proud to have as the vice chair of the effort a distinguished American, Henry Cisneros. (Applause.)

SECRETARY CISNEROS: Thank you, General Powell.

Mr. President, President Bush, Vice President Gore, Mrs. Clinton, for the last four years I've had the honor of serving as President Clinton's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. And from the very first conversation we had on the subject he stressed that the priority was dealing with those Americans who are homeless. After all, they are the most unhoused of Americans, and should be the priority for a department whose name begins with housing.

The President has been very strong in his insistence on work on homelessness and backing it with appropriate budgeting. But the work of the federal government in the field of homelessness is basically about budgets and distant support, because the federal government doesn't pull out one cot at night or fix one bed or prepare one meal. That work is done by people all across America --volunteers largely -- every single night. They're the ones who put the beds out as the evening settles in. They're the ones who prepare the meals. They're the ones who make the connection with the food banks. They are church volunteers opening up the basements of churches. They are people who are making available shelters when the winter sets in. These are volunteer Americans all across the country.

The federal government stands behind them as a partner, but the work is done by Americans of all ethnic groups and income groups in every community across America. And I have noted over the last four years that we've been able to make a real dent in the problem of homelessness as a result of the harnessing of this partnership.

This partnership, this principle of partnership, exists in many other fields, as has been cited here today -- in literacy work, in counseling for young people, youth work in recreational settings all across the country, in settings where there have not been for years Boy Scouts and

Explorer Scouts and Girl Scouts and Boys and Girls Clubs. Volunteers are doing that work and saving children's lives.

I've noted also that as many lives as are touched among those who are helped, just about as many lives are touched in those who do the work. I've seen the light in people's eyes and faces as they acknowledge the work that they, themselves, have done. I've been to Thanksgiving Day dinners for the elderly where people have stepped away from their own Thanksgiving Day lunch with their families in order to spend a few hours feeding the elderly on a day when they otherwise would have only something out of a can in a cold place. And I've seen the effect on them.

This is clearly a way in which we can multiply the sense of community and goodwill across our country and create a new mathematics -- a mathematics of two plus two equals five or six or seven as we redouble our efforts.

Erskine, it's not a mathematics that OMB approves of, but I've tried my best as Secretary of HUD to persuade that this is the way ought to budget -- (laughter) -- the housing budget.

Let me in closing say just two things. One is that this is completely in keeping with what the President said in his inaugural remarks last Monday -- that government is not the problem; government is not the solution; the American people are the solution. And as one who has served for the last four years, I have seen over and over again across the country the work of the American people at the grass roots, really making a difference in people's lives.

Finally, let me say, Mr. President, and President Bush, you selected well in selecting one of the most distinguished Americans of our time to head this effort. And I am very honored to be asked to support him and his efforts in every way that I can. I will do my best.

Thank you. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'd like to thank President Bush and General Powell and Secretary Cisneros and all the rest of you for being here; especially the members of Congress, members of the administration, the mayors and others who are here.

We are going to adjourn now and have a reception. But as we leave I'd like to just ask that we keep in mind the last point that Secretary Cisneros made. I imagine that Ray Chambers was a happy and successful man before he decided to give his whole life over to other people's welfare. But I can't imagine that he emanated the glow that he does today that we all see -- and that you see in the lives of other people who give.

And I guess -- you know, our wealth and power are very important in America and they must be maintained. But the pursuit of happiness involves more. And it really is true that in giving, we receive. So if we give a lot, we'll get a lot, and our country will enter this new century in wonderful, wonderful shape.

Thank you all and God bless you. We're adjourned. (Applause.)

END

3:17 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 3, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ANNOUNCEMENT TO LAUNCH
THE COALITION FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN

The East
Room

12:17 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: I want to thank all those who have been a part of this. Alex Kroll, thank you for what you said and for reminding us that we're about the business of helping parents, not disrespecting the difficulties they face. Christine Benero, thank you. Eva Kasten, the Executive Vice President of the Advertising Council, thank you. I thank the Benton Foundation, the AT&T Foundation, the Packard Foundation.

I'd like to thank the people in our administration probably most directly involved in helping our children who are here today -- Secretary Riley, Secretary Shalala, and Harris Wofford, the head of the Corporation for National Service.

But most of all, I want to thank Bradley Pine and Lonzo Warren for coming here to share their story. Their relationship is a powerful example of what could be done all over America if we move from vague rhetoric to specific action directed at helping and supporting all of our children.

Just think of what would happen in this country if every single child who needed a mentor had one. Think of what would happen if every person out there who is willing to volunteer to help knew where to go and how to do it. The public service message we just saw that Hillary and I were honored to participate in is simply designed to remind every American that there are children out there who need our support, and to tell every American who wants to serve that there is a way to serve and we will help you do it.

We know that being a parent is the most difficult and important job in the world. And

we know that everyone has to help. Hillary has been working on these children's issues since before I met her, a long time ago now, and I think that the book that she wrote did capture the image of the village raising our children. But it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that what that really means is that each and every one of us has a personal responsibility to do our part. And also, thanks to this effort, it will be easier for people to understand how to exercise that responsibility.

I'm especially fond of the work that we have done in this regard. We've done all we could to encourage citizen service. We now have more than 50,000 young people working in AmeriCorps, earning money to go to college. Many, many of them are helping our children in supportive ways.

Last summer, we launched our America Reads program to try to mobilize one million volunteer tutors in America to make sure that by the year 2000 every single 8-year-old in this country can read independently and will have a chance to make the most of his or her education. Today, I am pleased to announce that Scholastic Books is donating one million books to help us reach that goal. We need more companies like Scholastic Books to give more Americans the opportunity to serve.

In January, I was proud to stand right here with President Bush and General Colin Powell and former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros to announce that we are convening the first ever President's Summit of Service in April in Philadelphia, to bring together business, religious, community leaders committed to support citizen service with resources and volunteers. With their help, I hope we can make the plea we make in this public service announcement a reality for tens of thousands of more people in the United States.

This public service announcement is just what it seems to be. It seeks to help in mobilizing a volunteer force of Americans. It reflects the wisdom that no impersonal bureaucracy can ever replace the magic that we saw here between Bradley and Lonzo, or the feeling that Lonzo expressed for his own family, who are here with him today. What we can do is to make it possible for more things like that to happen, and to give our children the basic supports they need to make it happen. But in the end, we must make this vast, big, complicated society of ours more of a society in which we all feel that we should volunteer and, like Bradley, we know we're going to be better off for doing it; we'll get more out of it than we give. We have to create the networks to facilitate that kind of volunteerism.

The public service announcement, as you saw, gives people a number to call, a web site to visit, to learn about organizations in their very own communities where they can volunteer their time --to become a reading tutor or a math coach, or a mentor to a child in need. Beginning today, anyone visiting the White House home page on the Internet will be able to connect to the coalition's web site with just a click of the mouse, and find out what they can do to help.

The more people this message reaches, the more children will be helped. So far, some of

our biggest television, cable and radio networks have committed to air this message during times when it will have the best chance of inspiring the largest number of people. Newsweek, The New York Times and People Magazine will also run the message in their pages. And movie-goers will see it in theatres all over the country, thanks to promotion slide and cinema advertisers. This is a very good start.

But let me encourage other media organizations around the country to help to make sure this message is heard by as many people as possible -- to help to work with us to encourage the spirit of service in America, to strengthen our families, to improve the lives of our children one at a time.

Whenever you think about what else we can do, just think of Bradley and Lonzo and multiply it by millions, and imagine the America we can make together. Thank you. God bless you. (Applause.)

END

12:24 P.M. EST