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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 22, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT
DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE GALA

Washington Hilton Hotel
Washington, D.C.

9:09 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Chairman Wilhelm, my good friend, Vernon Jordan -- between the two of you there's nothing left for me to say. (Laughter.) I thank you for your leadership of our party. I congratulate you and Deegee on the upcoming birth of your first child. (Applause.)

I thank Vernon and Ann Jordan and all those others who worked on this dinner and made it so successful tonight. I want to thank Terry McAuliffe and all the cochairmen of this dinner. (Applause.) The members of the Congress, the members of the Cabinet, members of the administration who are here and my fellow Americans. I have two pieces of good news tonight. The first is that with about a half an hour left to go, the United States is ahead in the World Cup 2-0 over Colombia. (Applause.) I kind of like this World Cup. It reminds me of my campaign. We're the underdog in this deal; I like it. (Laughter.)

The second is far more important and, perhaps most of you have already heard, but this afternoon, the United States received official confirmation that North Korea is prepared to freeze its nuclear program in return for talking to us about their differences. (Applause.)

This event, of course, is important to all of us -- to our children and, if we're successful, even to our children's children. It does not solve our problems, but it gives us a chance to begin to solve them. It came about because of the steadfastness and resolve of our administration and working with our allies. In this case, we had an interesting set of allies from the very beginning -- of course, our friends in South Korea and Japan, but also in Russia and China. There was a sense that we had to do something here.

It came about because of the deft footing of our case, and the case for North Korea's coming into the community of nations by another great Democrat, former President Jimmy Carter. (Applause.) And tonight, I mentioned it not only because it is so important to all of us and to our future, but because in addition to this being a party gala, it is an American celebration.

When I heard on the way in the themes of the little film

you saw on our administration, I thought to myself that most of those things we have done benefit people without regard to their party; and that Democrats in 1992 promised a new direction for our country, one rooted in the real problems and the real promise of this nation. I had some fairly basic ideas. I thought that we could not be strong abroad unless we were strong at home, that we could never be strong at home if we tried to withdraw from the world, but that we had to rebuild ourselves from the grass roots, based on the real conditions in our country.

I'll never forget when David Wilhelm suggested that we get on that bus. It was easy for him to say; he didn't have to ride on it as long as we did. (Laughter.) But I think Hillary and Al and Tipper would admit that that bus and those trips not only became the symbol of our campaign, but kept us firmly rooted to the American people. We saw individually the people that had been beaten down and had often given up on their national government, maybe collectively they were cynical and believed gridlock was inevitable, but individually, they were full of hope and concern. They wanted so much for the promise of America to be alive for their children, and they knew that some tough things would have to be done.

There's no way that TV ads could convey what we saw in the eyes of a woman on the side of the road in the Middle West one night who told us that her husband and she had been married for 35 years, and he had been having increasing difficulty holding on to jobs because of the decline of the economy and, finally, he had taken a job paying just over \$5 an hour, and they had lost their health insurance and she was ill. And she did not know what to do, but she was absolutely sure that they had worked hard and played by the rules.

There's no way a poll or a commercial could recapture the face of the woman I saw in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, one day at a Quaker Oats plant, holding a child of another race while we were being demonstrated against by people who disagreed with my pro-choice position. This woman had a pro-choice sticker on, and she had a baby in her arms of another race. And I said, "Where did you get that baby?" And she said, "This is my baby." And I said, "Well, where did you get this baby?" She said, "I got this baby from Florida and she has AIDS. But somebody's got to take care of all these babies with AIDS."

This woman had been divorced, was living in an apartment with her own two children, struggling to make ends meet, and she had adopted another child. She said, "I'm for you, and I wish you'd tell those people back there with their signs if they feel so strongly about it, come help me adopt these babies and stand up for their right to grow up and live a good life." (Applause.)

I met a sheriff in East Texas who's got to be the only East Texas sheriff in America that subscribed to Rolling Stone. (Laughter.) Who told me he wanted me to pass a real tough crime bill, but not to forget that the kids needed something to say yes to as well.

I wish I could just tell you all these stories. But when I showed up here, I knew that, as my granddaddy used to say, there would be a lot of slips between the cup and the lip. But if I could just keep remembering all those people, in the end it would come out all right.

And what we have tried to do is exactly what I said I would try to in the campaign. We've tried to restore the economy, to restore the link between the people and the government, to make it work for ordinary people again, to rebuild a sense of work and family and community and empowerment of individual citizens, and to move this country into the 21st century -- still the greatest country in the world with the most hopes for our children.

If you look at what has happened in the last 18 months, I think you can make a pretty compelling case that we're doing the right things. Our economy is growing steadily; over 3.4 million new jobs in 16 months, more than in the previous four years combined; a point-and-a-half-plus drop in the unemployment rate. In 1993, more new business incorporations than in any year since World War II. In the first quarter of this year, the first quarter in over 15 years when there was not a bank failure.

Our Republican friends always talk about how they deplored the deficit and they deplored government spending. But it just kept getting bigger when they were in office. And they blamed the Congress. But when you look at the facts, the truth is that, in spite of the exploding deficits, Congress actually appropriated slightly less money in the previous 12 years than the administrations asked for. (Applause.)

And all that about -- there's the congressmen clapping out there, tell you the truth. (Laughter.) But they were very skilled at saying one thing and doing another. And I'm not very good at that, and it embarrasses me, so we decided we'd actually try to bring the deficit down.

Last year, by the narrowest of margins, because we got no help and a lot of hot rhetoric, our economic plan passed. And it began a system of disciplined budgeting, which will be accompanied by this year's budget -- the first time in 17 years two President's budgets have been adopted on time by the United States Congress. (Applause.) That will give us three years of deficit reduction for the first time since Harry Truman was the President of the United States of America. (Applause.)

And I want you to know -- working with this Congress, this budget, the Congress will eliminate over 100 government programs outright, will cut 200 more; will not only be reducing defense, but will reduce domestic discretionary spending for the first time since 1969, in 25 years. And still we will spend more money on Head Start, more money on women and infant children, more money on school-to-work opportunities, more money on education and new technologies for the future. We will invest more in people and still cut government spending, because we hired on to get things done, not to just about them, and that is what the Democrats are doing in this town today. (Applause.)

When you put that with the initiatives in trade that this administration has taken -- more in 18 months than had been done in a generation -- we have the basis for the first growth in America in 30 years that is led by investment and that has no inflation -- in 30 years. That is what I asked for a chance to work on and what you helped to give me. And no amount of rhetoric to the contrary can take away those facts. (Applause.)

The second thing I said I would try to do is to make government work for ordinary people. And I think we've made a pretty

good stab at that. With the support of the public employee unions, we have passed budgets which will reduce the size of the national government by a quarter of a million by attrition over five years, and leave us at the end of a five-year period with the smallest federal work force since John Kennedy was the President of the United States. And the money will be used to pay for the crime bill to make our streets safer. That is a matter of record. (Applause.)

We've also begun to make the government work again. Terry McAuliffe told me yesterday that a reporter for a newspaper that is not exactly a house organ of the Democratic Party called him and said, how did you get all these businesspeople to contribute to the Democratic Party? He said, well, the President's got a good pro-business position. And a reporter starting laughing. One of the real problems here, you know, you're always in the most trouble when you think you have nothing to learn. (Laughter.)

The Small Business Administration, under the leadership of Erskine Bowles, will now let you apply for a loan on a one-page form -- something small businesspeople have been begging for for years. (Applause.) The Emergency Management Agency, which was the source of ridicule and anger and frustration and revulsion for years because it was dominated by political appointees, now has a director from my home state who did it for a living. And he's the most popular federal bureaucrat in the United States because FEMA has been there in earthquakes and fires and tornadoes, when people needed it. Nobody worries about whether the federal government is going to be there to do its job anymore. (Applause.)

Rice farmers in Northern California, a few weeks, for the first time ever, shipped their rice out of ports in Northern California to sell in Japan, because the government is working for ordinary people again. (Applause.)

I don't know how many businesspeople I've had come up to me in the last year and say, you know, I'm a Republican, but you have the only administration where the Commerce Department and the State Department work together to try to help me do business overseas, and I appreciate that. (Applause.)

I wanted to break gridlock. For seven years, the world trade agreement was tied up. It was ratified last year by the nations, and we're going to implement it this year. For seven years -- seven years -- even after the attempt on President Reagan's life, with his fine Press Secretary, Jim Brady, surviving by a miracle and campaigning like crazy for the Brady Bill for seven years the NRA and others tied it up in Congress. But we passed it last year. (Applause.)

For seven years, even though it had some bipartisan support, the Family and Medical Leave Act could not pass the Congress, but we passed it last year. No presidential vetoes. (Applause.) Support for families in the workplace. (Applause.) For six years now, politics has kept the crime bill from passing, but we are on the verge of passing the most important piece of anticrime legislation in the history of the United States -- more punishment but more prevention; more police. And the ban on assault weapons, which lost just two years ago by 70 votes in the House of Representatives, passed. We have brought an end to the gridlock in this country, and we should not let it go back the other way at election time. (Applause.)

Now we're working on health care. First, the other side said there was no crisis. Then there was a crisis but we needed a bipartisan solution. I said, fine; here's my plan, you tell me how we going to change it, but we've got to cover everybody. Then they started running ads saying I was trying to give health care to the government, which wasn't true. But I went out and listened to people, and I said, well, maybe it is too bureaucratic. So we changed it some more, and took out some of the mandatory provisions and made it more flexible to try to make it more responsive.

And then a Republican Congressman from Iowa named Fred Grandy stood up and told the awful truth that he and his colleagues had been given marching orders to do nothing to cooperate to try to solve the health care problems in this country.

The Governor of Florida was in here today, talking about how he had a bill in Florida that was not mandatory, but would made the situation better; that had the support of every organization in his state. And it still died the in Senate of the state of Florida because there's a 20-20 split between Republicans and Democrats. And with all the interest groups saying, please do something about health care, every last Republican senator still voted against it so they couldn't say he did anything on health care.

Now, in the Senate Finance Committee, there are a couple of Republicans who have worked on health care for years, who are trying to come together and reach some accommodation. And I can tell you they are under withering pressure. But, folks, those people who say, let's just cover 90 percent and forget about it, it won't work. It won't work. Three million working Americans have lost their health insurance in the last three years. We are going backwards. We are the only country in the world with an advanced economy that has not figured out how to cover everybody.

Read the article in The Washington Post today about the German health care system. The German health care system today takes up a smaller percentage of the income of Germany than it did two years ago. It's about 8.5 percent. Our health care system costs us 14.5 percent of our income, and we still can't figure out how to cover -- we're not even at 85 percent anymore.

And all the solutions that say, well, let's just not make any tough decisions and go up to 90 percent cost you a double-ton of money in taxes, subsidize the poor -- most of whom already can at least get Medicare -- and do not one single solitary thing for the working middle class, 80 percent of whom are those who don't have insurance and who are terribly insecure.

I'm telling you, we have got to face this problem and face it now. Harry Truman tried to get us to do it 50 years ago and we didn't do it, and we've been paying for it ever since.
(Applause.)

Let me say that any time you quote Harry Truman now, the Republicans stand up and clap, and everybody says, gosh, I wish we had him around; it's too bad we don't have anybody like Truman anymore. Let me tell you something, folks, I came from one of those families that was for him when he was living. (Laughter and applause.) And a lot of the people that brag on him today wouldn't have walked across the street to shake his hand when he was in office -- (applause) -- because he stood up for ordinary people and he told extraordinary truths and he tried to get us to face the problems of

our time. Now, in retrospect, we can see that he did a good job.

Every midterm election in the 20th century except one -- when President Roosevelt could not pass Social Security in 1934 -- every other one has seen a loss in both Houses, or at least one House, for the President in power, his party. Why? Because there is always a disappointment from the bright promise of the inauguration to the hard reality of governing. Governor Cuomo used to say, we campaign in poetry and we govern in prose. (Laughter.)

But there is a special problem this year. What is it? It is that there is so much accumulated cynicism in this country, and people are always told about the process, the conflict, the ups, the downs, the differences that a lot of people don't even know what I have just told you. And our adversaries are banking on two things: Number one, they believe the cynicism of the electorate will, A, cause them to say, I don't believe it if they hear what we have done; and, B, cause them to blame those of us who are in if we fail to change because they bring back gridlock. And so they think they can be rewarded if they stop anything from happening. And the second thing that they hope is that they can divert the attention of a significant number of our voters from the crying issues that unite us as a people by trying to launch another cultural war.

And this is not just my opinion. There's a new book out by David Frame (sp) conservative and former editorial writer of the Wall Street Journal, that you can find adapted in Harper's this week. He says that conservatives fail to control the size and cost of government, and they've basically given that up. That's true; we've done a better job of that than they did. So, instead, he predicts politics in the future will become a lot nastier, and that the only way to mobilize and excite voters will be to trade on our differences on moral and ethnic and racial issues.

I can tell you, folks, we have not survived over 200 years as the strongest and oldest democracy in this country by fighting out our differences on moral and racial and ethnic issues. (Applause.) And we did not get where we are by becoming mired in the luxury -- and I use the word clearly -- the luxury of cynicism.

You know, the biggest honor I think I've had as your President was going to represent us at the D-Day ceremonies. It was one of the most extraordinary events of Hillary's and my life; going first to Italy and seeing what our soldiers endured there -- being shelled and killed on those beaches week after week, not able to get off -- going to England and seeing the 3,800 graves of people who fought in the air war for two years before the D-Day invasion, and the list of 5,000 names of people who never came back, including Joe Kennedy, Jr. and the great American band leader, Glenn Miller; and then going to the beaches at Normandy. And the thing that struck me overwhelmingly was that these people who saved the world, who laid their lives on the line, they didn't have an option. They knew what was at stake. And it makes a mockery of their sacrifice for us to be cynical about fulfilling our own legacy.

This whole atmosphere that permeates this town now -- nothing makes any difference, and it's all who's up and down and in and out and all that. This obsession with process and conflict over product, it makes a mockery of what has gotten us here for 200 years.

I'm going to tell you something -- most of the people

I've known in politics for 20 years, both parties, have been honest. Most of them have worked hard. Most of them have done what they thought was right. Most of the time we fought over things that were honest differences, worth arguing and fighting over. And we're about to get ourselves in a fix on the dawn of the 21st century. We've got the strongest economy in the world; we are the envy of the world; our diversity is a source of great strength and the great, great mother lode of wealth for us in the 21st century in the global economy, if we've got sense enough to rescue these kids out of these cities, whose lives are being squandered. And the only thing that can mess it up for us is if we permitted ourselves to have the wrong fights, to believe that we were immoral because we had differences over certain issues, and if we permitted ourselves to become so cynical that we wouldn't even listen to the truth.

And I am here tonight to tell you that what you need to do is to go out of this room tonight and not just be glad that you gave money to this party and to our administration and to our continued efforts, but to think of your words as a knife that can cut through stone. And every time you hear one of your fellow Americans say some cynical and nonsensical thing implying that we're all up here just trying to feather our nest, and it doesn't make any difference what's done and everything's in trouble, you tell them the truth -- not to benefit me and the Democrats in Congress, although to be sure, we'll be benefitted for it because we have broken gridlock and we are moving forward -- but to give Americans their citizenship back.

We did not get here by being cynics, we got here by being believers. Thank you and God bless you all. (Applause.)

END

9:36 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(New Orleans, Louisiana)

For Immediate Release

September 9, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN SPEECH TO NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana

11:10 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: If I could sing like that, I would have never gotten into politics. (Laughter and applause.) Reverend Jemison; your President-Elect, Dr. Lyons -- (applause) -- to Dr. Richardson -- (applause), Reverend James, Dr. Mary Ross.

To all the distinguished Louisianans here present, including Reverend Governor Edwards; I thought he did very well today. (Applause.) Senator Breaux and Congressman Jefferson and Mayor Morial and all your state officials and legislators. Reverend Jackson. (Applause.) To all the members of my staff and Cabinet who are here.

Where are the people here with the administration? They're all here somewhere. (Applause.)

I want to say many things, but first we have a duty, I think, as Americans to take a moment of silence now for the 131 people who were killed in that awful air crash in Pittsburgh. Hillary and I send our deepest sympathies and our prayers to the friends and the loved ones of the crash victims. And I know that all of you and all Americans also send your prayers to the grieving.

Our Secretary of Transportation, Secretary Pena is there in Pittsburgh. I have talked with the Mayor and the Governor this morning and with Senator Wofford. All Americans should know that we will do whatever we can to assure their safety in travel. But let us today, in the painful recognition of our fallibility as human beings, mourn with a moment of silence those who lost their lives. Amen.

Well, Dr. Jemison, I thank you for that warm introduction. I have known you as a friend for a long time. When we were standing outside, about to come up, he was reviewing his more than 50 years in the leadership of this great church. That's a long time, worthy of honor, and I give it. (Applause.)

Two years ago I had a great moment with all of you in Atlanta when I was running for President. (Applause.) And last year, I was invited to appear and I couldn't; I had to give my regrets. I sort of felt like the boy who skipped Sunday school. (Laughter.) I promised Dr. Jemison I'd be here this year no matter what, so I showed up, and I hope you have forgiven me because I feel at home. (Applause.)

Two years ago I came to you, and you responded. I asked you to work with me to give us at least a chance to change the direction our country was headed in. We had too much debt and too few jobs. We seemed to be going in the wrong direction where ordinary Americans were ignored, and people with money and organized power were heeded, but somehow the thing was not working.

As the Vice President used to say, what ought to be up was down, and what ought to be down was up. And that was a problem. I wanted a chance to try to move this country forward again and to try to pull our country together again.

Today, having served now for not quite two years, I guess what I want to say to you is I think we're doing a pretty good job of moving forward, but not nearly a good enough job of coming together. (Applause.)

I have here in the front some of my friends and former employers from the State of Arkansas -- would you all stand up? (Applause.) Thank you and bless you for being here.

I lived in a little state to the north of here for a while, you know. And I learned that it was not healthy to say one thing to one group and one to another. You had to say the same thing to everybody and mean it every day.

I never will forget when I was running for president, one of the most memorable days I had was speaking on one day of the weekend in Macomb County, Michigan, the prototypical, what they used to call "Reagan Democrat county," where there was a lot of what they used to call "white flight." And then the next day I went to a black church in Detroit where half the people were from Arkansas. And I gave the same speech I had given the day before, and people thought that was strange. And I said, is it so strange that we should say the same thing to all Americans and try to come together?

I want to talk to you today about that. I still believe what I

believed two years ago -- that the government has a role to play in the future of this country and the future of our families and our hopes and our dreams, not as savior, but not on the sidelines -- just as a partner in progress. I still believe that, together, we can meet every challenge, that we can fulfill the hopes of our children. I still believe there are a lot of things we have to do that go way beyond the reach of government into the depths of the human spirit.

Today I say to you again, I think we're making a lot of progress, and I feel good about that. But I don't think we're doing as well as we should in coming together. (Applause.) And I don't feel good about that, and I want to examine that and what I could do better and what you can do better.

I noticed a columnist wrote the other day in the newspaper, he said, there's lots of things going right in this country. The economy is booming, we've got over 4 million new jobs, the stock market is up, the deficit is down, things look good in the future. Our country was just rated the most productive country in the entire world for the first time in nearly 10 years; we've got over 4 million new jobs -- as I said, the unemployment rate is down. A lot of things are going well. (Applause.)

We see around the world real progress -- peace in the Middle East, in the Holy Land -- something that should gladden the heart of every Christian. We see peace prospects and moving forward in Northern Ireland -- something many of us thought we would never see. We see the majesty of peace and democracy and freedom unfolding in South Africa. And I want to thank Reverend Jackson for his leadership of our election team over there in South Africa, doing that process. (Applause.)

And so the writer said -- he was writing about me -- he said, if things are going so well, why are people still mad at the President? Well, what he might have said is, you remember that old saying, "If I'm so rich, why I am not happy?" (Laughter.)

Well, there are a lot of reasons for that. But let me offer one. I just got back from vacation and when I was on vacation I went to church and I heard a minister I'd never seen before from a little town in New Jersey, called Red Bank. (Applause.) You know where Red Bank, New Jersey is? (Applause.)

The first thing he did was give us dispensation for being on vacation, which I felt good about. He said, life is not all work, it is also play and rest and worship. But he went on to say it's not only important to do all those things, but to get them right. And if you don't have faith, you won't have the rhythm right. You will find yourselves working at play and playing at worship and you'll have it all messed up. (Applause.)

Well, that's kind of what's going on in our country today. We still haven't quite got the rhythm right. So that even though we are facing a lot of our most profound problems, and even though we are clearly making progress in areas too long ignored, which many of you have mentioned here, we have to say: what is the real deal here? Why aren't we happier about it?

There are many reasons, but let me offer three. One is, whenever periods of profound change occur in the lives of individuals or nations, they are unsettling. Isn't that right? Can't you think of times in your own life when you were making a change, and every day you woke up and it was like there was this scale inside your body, and on one side of the scale was hope and on the other side of the scale was fear, and it seemed like every day, the scales would be in a little bit different balance until you finally got through this change you were going through.

We can all identify with that. That's what's going on in this country today. It's happened before. At the end of the First World War, we won this great battle and we didn't know what to do with ourselves, and so we just came home and folded up our tents. We thought we could withdraw from the world. And what happened? That's when the Ku Klux Klan first started rising up. At the end of the First World War, when we lost our concentration and we lost our way and we didn't know who the enemy was anymore. It's also when we had the first Red Scare, when everybody began to be accused of being a communist if they had unconventional opinions.

Then, at the end of the Second World War, the same sort of thing happened, except we knew better then to withdraw from the world. Harry Truman said, no, no, we're going to rebuild the country here at home for the soldiers and their families, and we're going to rebuild our enemies, Germany and Japan; and our allies in Europe.

And we know who the enemy is, it's the Soviet Union and communism, so we're going to have a great wall against communism, and we're going to fight this Cold War.

But, still, there was uncertainty. There was a new Red Scare, which came to its height under Senator McCarthy. And Harry Truman had a hard time getting people to change. You know, he was at 80 percent approval in the polls after he dropped the bomb which ended the war, but by the time he sent the second health reform legislation to Congress -- that's how long we've been trying to fix the health care system -- by the time Harry Truman did it the second time, he was down to 36 percent in the polls. Now, everybody talks about him like he ought to be on Mount Rushmore. (Laughter.) But I was for a family who supported him when he was living, and I know what happened.

Change is difficult. And when you're going through a period of change, we are vulnerable to getting out of our rhythm. The second problem is, we live in a time which almost seems to glorify the negative, the cynical, don't we? (Applause.) It's the old story -- there's a lot more people prone to see the glass of water is half empty than half full than there used to be, and to tell all the rest of us we're just fools if we see it half full; it's really half empty.

And then, frankly, let's face it: We still have some problems that are real deep in this country, that all the progress we're making does not necessarily touch. We have 4.1 million new jobs, the work force is expanding more rapidly than it did 10 years ago, the last time we had any kind of economic recovery, but lots of folks still out of work. A lot of folks live in places where they don't believe new jobs are coming. A lot of people are working harder; they have their job, but the don't think they'll ever get a raise.

Five million -- five million people live in working families who had health insurance five years ago, who do not have it today. (Applause.) So we have some real problems. Governor Edwards alluded to the most heart-breaking of all -- those that involve the children of this country, their sins and their abuses, and their loss of their childhood and their innocence, and our loss of their future. The 11-year-old boy in Chicago, Robert Sandifer, who sprayed gunfire at a group of kids and killed a 14-year-old girl and then killed himself; his grandmother saying, I could not reach you.

And then in New Jersey, the 13-year-old who stole a gun to end a petty argument and the life of his 11-year-old friend. In Detroit, Rosa Parks was attacked by a crack addict for \$53. In my hometown, an 82-year-old woman, attacked by two teenagers, brutalized and sexually molested -- 82 years old. These aren't Baptist problems or Catholic problems or Jewish problems. Contrary to what some people say, they're not black or white problems. No, the 11-year-old in Chicago was black, but the teenager in New Jersey who killed, and the victim were both white.

Rosa Parks is a hero to African Americans and a hero to people who have been oppressed throughout the world, but the 82-year-old woman in my hometown was a white lady, and so were the people who attacked her.

These problems and the problems behind them that brought the children to the miserable point in life where they did what they did. These are the things that are gnawing at our spirit that we have to address so we can get the rhythm right, we can go on and face the challenges of this time, all the changes. And we can make change our friend if we know that we are grounded. That is what your faith is about. But it is also now what our citizenship must be more about.

I note that there are many voices from all sectors preaching to us today about the decline in our values. In a way I welcome them all. And whether they are traditionally our allies or our adversaries, we should listen for the truth of their words; and if they are true, we should heed them. (Applause.)

On the other hand, I would issue two cautionary notes: We should not let the voices of despair make our insecurities even deeper. That is wrong. (Applause.) That is wrong. There have always been problems in every society and there will be until the end of time. That is the lesson of the Scripture. So for all the people who try to use the difficulties of the moment to dampen the energies of Americans, to defeat our spirits -- I say, that is wrong. The Scripture says, let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in -- we shall reap if we do not lose heart. (Applause.)

The darkness of every storm provides a new chance for renewal -- every storm. And so does this one. So to all those who preach that we need to return to the values of our faith, I say, we do. But the real issue is, what are we going to do about it? Not what are we going to say about it, but what are we going to do about it? The saying is important, for we, in words, come to visualize the future. And we need the vision so that we do not perish. But we must act on the vision. And that's where all the problems come.

You know the old story about the preacher who was preaching his best on Sunday morning and thought he had finally reached everybody in the service? And he said, I want everybody who wants to go to heaven to stand up right now, and everybody in the whole church stood up except Sister Jones who had not missed a day of church in 40 years. And he was crestfallen. It broke all his concentration. He stopped the sermon.

He said, "Sister Jones, you have not missed a sermon in 40 years. Do you mean to tell me you do not want to go to heaven when you die?" And she popped right up and she said, "Oh, I'm sorry, preacher, I thought you were trying to get up a load to go right now." (Laughter.)

Now that's a big problem, isn't it? We all want to do it somewhere down the road, but if we have to do something right now, well that's something we better think about. (Laughter.) So the challenge is, what are we going to do right now? Not later, but now. Right now. (Applause.)

I say this to the people who always say the glass is half empty, always being pessimistic, always being negative. They have it easy. That lets you out of any responsibility at all. You adopt a pessimistic, negative attitude. You be cynical. It just relieves you

of any responsibility for doing because then doing doesn't matter. Right? (Applause.)

All I can tell you is, there would be no free American sitting in this place today if the pessimists and the cynics and the negative people had ruled this country all along the way. (Applause.)

Our obligation and our power flows out of two simple lessons I was taught about our whole civilization many years ago in college. One is that the future can be better than the present -- not perfect, but better. And the second is that each of us has a personal, moral responsibility to make it so. That is the simple lesson -- (applause) -- that will get our rhythm back, that will put us back in harmony, that will enable us to enjoy our progress and still keep working on the deep and profound things that are challenging us and dealing with the unsettling impact of this changing time.

My vision is that we will go into the 21st century as a country more free, more prosperous, more united -- and more open to making change our friend than we have ever been.

Yes, we are beginning to see results. Yes, the economy is doing better. Yes, we are seeing more fairness as well as more progress. We did raise taxes on the wealthiest one and a half percent of Americans to bring the deficit down, but we also gave tax cuts to 15 million working families just above the poverty line to say, you got off welfare, you're working, we're going to reward you being a parent and a worker. We did that. We are making progress. (Applause.)

We got 180,000 more kids in Head Start. We're going to immunize a couple of million more children so that by 1996 all the kids two years of age and less like this little kid here, will have their shots. We're doing more to provide job training for people who lose their jobs, and we made 20 million Americans eligible to refinance their college loans at lower interest rates with a longer repayment terms. These things are important. They matter. (Applause.)

Work -- the dignity of work is central to our ability to build a future. The second thing we have to do is not just talk about how we need stronger families, but think about what I can do and you can do to make them stronger. (Applause.)

We didn't cut taxes for those 15 million working families for just political reasons. We did it because people have got to be able to succeed today as workers and as parents. And if we want people to work and parents, we have to reward work. That's why the Family and Medical Leave Act was so important. How can you say you want people to be good family members and then fire them if they have to take a little time off to have a baby or take care of sick parent? (Applause.)

There's a bill in the Congress I really believe in, sponsored by Senator Metzenbaum, to make adoptions easier and to make it possible for people to adopt children across racial lines if nobody else is there wanting to adopt the children. (Applause.) Don't leave kids in the limbo of foster care for years and years and years. Give them a chance to do it.

The third thing we have to do is to make our communities stronger. We have to act as if we believe what we talk about all the time, that we're all in this together. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is here today. Henry Cisneros has done more to come up with a program to end homelessness than anybody in the last 10 years. We've been talking about it. He's trying to do something about it. It makes us stronger as a community.

The welfare reform bill is about community --empowering everybody to participate. The enterprise zones are about giving poor communities the incentive to draw capital to put people to work. These things will make our communities stronger.

And the crime bill was about communities. Because if your streets aren't safe, if your schools aren't safe, if people don't feel secure, it's hard to call them to higher citizenship. What did Edwin Everett say -- if you've got the right to vote but you're scared to go to the polling place, it's hard to talk about citizenship. That's why it was important.

We're also trying to change the way government works, reforming the way we finance our campaigns and try to at least tell you what the lobbyists are doing in Washington with new disclosure requirements, a bill that would make Congress live under all the laws it imposes on you. That's not a bad idea, I think. (Applause.) These things are important.

We're trying to prove something that I always believe -- that you can have diversity and excellence at the same time. Look at our Cabinet: Five African Americans, more than twice as many as ever served. (Applause.) Fifteen percent of all appointments, more than twice as many appointments to the federal courts as the last three presidents combined are African Americans. (Applause.)

But what really ought to make you clap is that these judges have the highest percentage of well-qualified ratings by the American Bar Association since they have been giving out the ratings. They're not just from different racial groups and men and women; they're well qualified. (Applause.)

So there are things that government can do. This crime bill I

want to talk about because it runs into the question of harmony. There are a lot of things the government can't do. There are things the government can do, and it's still not enough. I know that crime bill wasn't perfect. And I know it imposed great, great challenges for the African American members of Congress and for many people and religious faiths because it contains capital punish provisions. And many people oppose capital punishment for everyone, and many others say that African Americans are more likely to get the penalty, because poor folks are more likely than non-poor folks to be convicted and sentenced to death.

I know that there are those who say that when we build more prisons and make sentences for repeat offenders longer and tougher, that will have a disproportionate impact on the African American community. But to that, I say this: Every time you look at the evening news, there's another funeral. And there's a disproportionate number of black kids lying in those pine boxes, too. (Applause.) And that's wrong. That's what's really wrong. And we have got to find a way, imperfect though it is, to get all the Americans together, with all their different perspectives, and move forward on this issue because if people are not safe, we're in trouble. And if we put the 100,000 police on the street and do it right, they'll prevent crime, not just catch criminals. (Applause.)

If we get these assault weapons off the street --and it's now illegal for kids to own handguns -- if we start enforcing that law, and if we do something with that prevention money, if we give these kids something to say yes to, if we do something with the job money, with the job training money, with the drug treatment money, with the recreation money, if we give people at that time of their lives when they've got all this energy some constructive outlet for it, it will make a difference. (Applause.)

But if you really want it, to lower the crime rate, reduce violence, and save more kids' lives, all the work is still to be done. All the work is still to be done. And it's like asking Sister Jones to go to heaven -- we've got to do this right now. We have to -- if we believe there is a crisis of the spirit, a crisis of values in this country, we have to do something about it right now. (Applause.) And we've got to do it where we live.

I would like to suggest just four simple things that go beyond government programs. And you know them all, and many of you are doing them all. But every American can make a contribution. We are raising a whole generation of kids who aren't sure they're the most important person in the world to anybody. (Applause.)

Now, consider this: Today, about 40 percent of all children are born in the homes where there was never a marriage. Twenty-seven

percent of all pregnancies end in abortion. I don't care what your position is, whether you're pro-choice or anti; that's too many. That's not about serious health problems or emotional problems.

So when the miracle of conception occurs, less than half of those miracles wind up being babies born into homes where there's a mother and a father and where the kid's got a better-than-even chance of having the life that most of us have, or we wouldn't be here in our neckties and nice dresses today. Now, that's just a fact.

Dr. King once said, "Whom we wish to change, we must first love." (Applause.) And I know not everybody is going to be in a stable, traditional family like you see in one of those 1950 sitcoms, but we'd be better off if more people were. I was raised by a wonderful mother who worked, who cared for me, who was a widow when I was born, went through a difficult marriage. And at least every now and then I find somebody who thinks I turned out all right. (Applause.)

So it can happen, but we have to say, who is going to care for these children?

In every single study that's ever been done of young people who did well against all the odds with terrible circumstances and all the things that could have gone wrong, it is always, always, always the case that they had a relationship with somebody who cared about them. Somebody. (Applause.)

I don't think we ought to give up on families. Yesterday I met with a number of ministers and one friend of mine who pastors a massive church in the Washington area, an African American church, has made the mission of his church the rebuilding of the family. Over 40 percent of the members are male, and he left our breakfast to go back to meet with 150 couples who had split up or never married. Some of them were divorced. Sometimes people had flown in from thousands of miles away. He was trying to get them back together for the children's sake and because it was the right thing to do. We need to do more of that. (Applause.)

But he's not just talking about it, he's doing something. If that's not an option, then somebody's got to love these children. When I was in Des Moines, Iowa, in the campaign, I saw a white lady holding an African American baby that had AIDS. She was from Iowa. The kid was from Miami. She had been abandoned by her husband. She had two children of her own. She was living in an apartment house, working at a meager job. She thought it

was God's will that she take a child who was sick and abandoned. And she did it. If she could do it, a lot of the rest of us should as well. (Applause.)

Someone has got to care for these children. I've heard Reverend Jackson talk about this. I think about it all the time as my daughter grows up. We have to find in families where the mother is doing all the work and there needs to be somebody outside the family, a male figure, who can at least relate to children, who can say things like, what are you reading and how are you doing in class. This is right and this is wrong. I'd like to see your report card. What do you want to do five years from now? (Applause.)

You know, how many children do we know -- how many children, how many of these kids that are shooting one another never think about five years from now? The future to them is five minutes from now. Why is that? Because no one is asking them about it. Where there is no vision, people perish. They cannot visualize five years from now. (Applause.) So that's the first thing.

The second thing we've got to do is help these kids at least grow up without fear -- which means we've got to keep them from getting shot and stop them from shooting. And laws can help, and policemen can help, but every two hours in this county another kid under the age of 19 dies from gunfire. A-nine-year old boy wrote me from this city right here in New Orleans and said, please do something about this. I'm afraid I could get killed. And on Mother's Day, a month after he wrote me, he got killed just walking home from school.

Now, there are things people can do in their neighborhoods to stop this. We are giving you more tools in terms of the laws and the police, but we've got to have help. Schools can be made safer. Walking routes can be made safer. Use the Crime Bill funds. The churches are eligible to participate -- and give kids something to do after school to get them off the street where they can be in recreation. (Applause.) I got so tired when we were debating that Crime Bill hearing people badmouth Midnight Basketball. I'd a lot rather have somebody shooting hoops than shooting bullets. (Applause.) But you have to make that work.

The third thing I would say is, we have to be more honest. Sometimes it is almost embarrassing, I know,

but we've got to be more honest with our young people in teaching them to respect themselves -- their bodies, their souls and their futures. (Applause.)

And we always talk about how irresponsible it is for young men to father these children and run off, but we've got to get more young women to make a different choice in life too. We have simply got to find a way to deal with this.

Thirty years ago one of 40 white births was out of wedlock, now it's one in five. Thirty years ago, one in five African American births was out of wedlock, now, over half. But the white out-of-wedlock birthrate is growing much faster than the African American rate. So, we are going to have equal opportunity for all before you know it. (Laughter.)

You're laughing to keep from crying, but it's not funny; is it? We're going to see a merger of this. No more race discrimination; more than half of everybody's babies will be born where there was never a marriage. That is a disaster. It is wrong, And someone has to say, again, it is simply not right. You shouldn't have a baby before you're ready, and you shouldn't have a baby when you're not married. You just have to stop it. We've got to turn it around.

Now I want to make it clear we shouldn't stigmatize these babies and when they're born we should to take care of them. We ought to love the babies. We ought to love the parents. We ought to give them the best future we can, but we have to tell people, look at the facts. Look at what happens to people. Look at their incomes, their education levels, their future. We've got to get people out of thinking that the future is five minutes away and realize it is five years or ten years or twenty years away. And you have to do that.

I'll try to do my part, but this is not a government deal. This is the way people are behaving, as if there was no respect for themselves and no future. We have to stop.

Finally, let me say, I ask you to help lead us in bringing back an ethic of service to this nation. We're going to kick off our National Service Program on Monday which will, this year, involve 20,000 young Americans in serving their community, many of them in

church groups. The Congress of National Black Churches is an active participant in national service. We want kids working with churches to solve a lot of these problems and earning credit for their college education. Year after next we'll have 100,000 young people. You can put them to work. When people are serving one another, when they're acting as role models, they'll be better people themselves. And you can do that.

All these things you can do -- help our kids be safer, help make sure every child is loved by somebody and disciplined by somebody and cared for by somebody. And help our kids change this culture which is ending family life and childhood as we know it and bring us back to the spirit of service.

Finally, let me say this: I came here to say this because I don't believe in preaching at people. I believe you are the heroes of this whole thing. A lot of you have been out there like the little Dutch Boy with your thumb in the dike against all these forces for years. A lot of you have been doing these things. A lot of you have run the day care centers and run the recreation programs and run the prison ministries and counseled the young people. You have done this. But America now knows that we must all do this.

So I say, I honor you. I honor the members of your church that get up and go to work every day and follow the law and pay their taxes and do their best to raise their kids.. And let us say for the record since all America is watching this, most of the members of your church do exactly that. They play by the rules, and they work hard and they do their best. (Applause.)

But let's not kid each other, folks. I'm going to go back to Washington. And I'll keep trying to create jobs. And we'll do a good job of that. And we'll open America to the world. I'll keep working for peace and freedom around the world. I'll keep working for better education and training opportunities. I'll keep trying to solve this terrible riddle of why we can't get jobs in the inner city and poor rural areas. And we'll try to find ways to do that.

But in the end, if we're going to get the rhythm right, if we're going to enjoy the progress we're making, even in an imperfect world, we have to get the bedrock right. We have to know that the spirit that we

believe in is rifling through this country and is going to work.

You know, Paul -- St. Paul -- was not Timothy's father, but he was his spiritual father. And he said, when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee. I believe and you believe that every child has a gift of God within them. When the gift dies, it is our sin as well as theirs, and our loss as well as theirs.

So let us leave here resolved to stir up the gift of God that is within us and do those things that will enable us to go forward with joy and confidence to make the future what it ought to be.

Thank you and God bless you all.

END12:52 P.M. CDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 21, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

J.W. Marriott
Washington, D.C.

12:55 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, John. I'm trying to fix this lectern, if you're wondering what I'm doing up here. I'm proving that I don't have sufficient mechanical skills. (Laughter.)

I want to thank John for his leadership as the chairman of this distinguished group, and welcome the incoming chair, John Snow, with whom I just shared a few words about some of our common interests in Europe. I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation for two of your members for working on issues that we share a common concern about -- Joe Gorman, who's chairing your session on education; and Larry Perlman, who's chairing the work force development section and discussing the reemployment act that he's helping us to work on and about which I wish to talk today.

I want to thank the Business Roundtable for sharing a belief with me and with our administration that we have to move aggressively to embrace the challenges of the global economy. That, after all, is why we worked hard on the North American Free Trade Agreement and why we are working together to pass the GATT agreement.

I also want to thank you for our common understanding of a simple but powerful truth, which is that even as we lower barriers to trade around the world, we must work hard to lift our people up here at home so that they can compete and win and carry on their work and build their lives. Investing in our people's God-given potential is good economics. You know that, and I do. It pays off in higher productivity, more incomes, a competitive edge for our companies and our country in the global marketplace.

We talk about this all the time in the White House. I know that -- I see our -- my Chief of Staff, Mr. McLarty, and our Economic Advisor, Mr. Rubin; the Deputy Treasury Secretary, Mr. Altman, is here. There may be others here from the administration. These are things that we say all the time in our meetings.

I appreciate the work that you did in helping us to pass the Goals 2000 legislation, one of the most important education reforms in a generation in this country. When we work together we can do things that help America prepare for the future.

I think today is an especially appropriate day for me to be here, speaking with you about how we can better prepare our country for change. Fifty years ago tomorrow, as the Allied armies

advanced from the beaches of Normandy, President Roosevelt signed a bill that was called the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, better known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. Just as D-Day was the greatest military action in history, the G.I. Bill arguably was the greatest investment in our people in American history. Its legacy is the world's largest middle class, the world's strongest economy. Its lesson is, in large measure, the mission of our administration: If you give people a chance to help themselves, they'll do it, and they'll do extraordinary things.

Before World War II, our country often failed to prepare returning veterans after wars. We gave them pensions and bonuses, but they had nothing left to build their future with. That's why jobless and despairing veterans of World War I actually marched on Washington in 1932; why President Roosevelt declared that the G.I. bill -- quote -- "gave emphatic notice to the men and women of our Armed Forces that the American people do not intend to let them down."

We know why the G.I. Bill didn't let them down: It relied on American values of work and responsibility. It offered a hand up, not a handout. The veterans of World War I, by contrast, got a handout. To be sure, one they earned and one the country was grateful for, but they got cash and a train ticket home. But the veterans of World War II got a ticket to the future instead.

Uncle Sam helped them to go to college, to get job training, to finance homes and businesses of their own. But it was up to them to seize the opportunities. They did, and all of us are the better.

The G.I. Bill helped eight million returning veterans begin that journey. They flooded colleges and trade school -- 450,000 veterans became engineers; 360,000 became school teachers; 240,000 became accountants; 180,000 became doctors and nurses; 150,000 became scientists. Millions more bought homes or built businesses. Maybe some of them are among you who invited me here to be with you today.

We really can't even begin to calculate how much our nation was enriched by the G.I. Bill -- how many communities sprung up, how many companies prospered, how many families earned their share of the American Dream. This much we do know: Together all those people built the American middle class that has been the bulwark of our prosperity since World War II.

Fifty years after the signing of the G.I. Bill, the world's changed a lot. Our economy has clearly changed. But what it takes for our people to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow has not changed. Now as then, we stand at a pivot point in history. In the five decades between, our country mustered another great international commitment -- the commitment to stand strong in the Cold War. That succeeded. Now we see a world economy taking shape where investment and information flow rapidly across national borders. Competition for jobs and incomes is international and highly intense. And once again, we are being called upon to decide our future.

I have a vision, a mission, a strategy for how I believe all this should take place; how we can move forward in the 21st century; what the partnership between government ought to be; what the whole atmospherics in this country, the feeling about our mission

ought to be. I must say, it doesn't sit very well into the established categories of left and right and liberal and conservative and Democratic and Republican. And I feel frustrated sometimes at my ability to pierce the atmosphere that prevails here.

But it is clear to me that if we are going to make a future that is consistent with our values, we're going to have to do it with a different approach. Still, it has to be built on the spirit that animated the GI Bill -- give Americans the chance to make their own lives in this fast-changing world so the change can be their friends and not their enemies.

To do it we have to move on many fronts. We have to create an environment where business can create new jobs and new growth. We have to open markets for our goods and services, for our companies and our workers. We have to invest in our people's work and security.

When I assumed this office, the deficit had been increasing exponentially for 12 years, trade agreements were stalled, job growth was agonizingly slow, consumer confidence was shaky. We were actually facing the prospect that, for the first time, a generation of Americans would grow up to a future that was more limited than that which their parents enjoyed.

I adopted a strategy to, first, work on expanding the economy and getting our own economic house in order; second, to make government work for ordinary citizens and end gridlock; third, to empower people and strengthen communities; and fourth, to secure our role in the world, defending our fundamental security interests, expanding our economic interests, promoting democracy, human rights, and limiting the spread of destructive chaos arising out of ethnic and other hatreds.

The atmosphere, frankly, here has been more hostile to change than I had imagined it would be. The American people desperately wanted change, but were often unwilling to listen to the complex debates and make the difficult decisions that are inherent in it. And this town still is, in my judgment, too partisan, too negative, too obsessed with process and conflict instead of results and progress, too interested in blame and too little interested in responsibility.

Nonetheless, we have been able to put together an economic strategy for putting our house in order, making hard decisions that will make it possible next year, for the first time since Truman was President, to have three years in a row of deficit reduction; eliminating over 100 government programs outright; cutting 200 others; eliminating -- cutting domestic discretionary spending. - that's everything besides Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the other entitlements -- cutting discretionary spending on the domestic side, not just defense, for the first time in 25 years.

All of that will enable us to reduce the deficit three years in a row for the first time since the Truman presidency. It means we've had to slash the federal government, to bring more responsibility into the budgeting process. We completed the budget by the May 15 deadline for two years in a row for the first time in 17 years.

We are making progress. We've adopted a very aggressive attitude on trade, which you've been a part of, as all of you know:

NAFTA, GATT, the APEC meetings -- I'm going to second one in Indonesia this fall -- a hemispheric summit at the end of the year with all the leaders of the Latin American democracies. And 33 of the 35 countries in Latin America, along with the United States, are now headed by elected governmental officials.

We've now got the first investment-led, low-inflation-based economic recovery since the early 1960s. In addition to that, we have worked hard to make government work. With the reinventing government program that the Vice President has spearheaded, at the end of five years, we will have a federal bureaucracy that has 250,000 fewer federal employees and is under two million in civilian workers for the first time since the Kennedy presidency.

We have federal agencies that are working again in fundamental ways to engage the business community in the growth of the economy all around the world. The Export-Import Bank -- I see Mr. Brody over there. I don't know how many businessmen have come up to me and said, for the first time in my life -- I travel overseas and I see the State Department and the Commerce Department actually working together trying to promote American business interests. And I appreciate it.

The Small Business Administration has been virtually revolutionized in the way it works with small businesses. You can now apply for a loan on a one-page form. People talk to me everywhere I go in America about the emergency management agency, FEMA, of the federal government, saying it finally has become the shining light of what a government ought to be when people are in trouble instead of just in pain in the neck that has to be dealt with. We are trying to make government work.

The Congress has before it major campaign finance reform and lobby reform legislation that has passed both Houses of the Congress, awaiting now a conference that will iron out the differences and send that to me for signature.

Maybe most important of all, in spite of everything, gridlock is being dealt with. Last year, the Congress passed the Brady Bill and the Family Leave Bill after seven years of gridlock. We got agreement among the great nations on GATT after seven years of debate.

This year the Congress is going to pass a crime bill after six years of gridlock -- one that will be the most sweeping anticrime legislation ever adopted by the Congress -- 100,000 more police officers on our streets, tougher punishment, innovative prevention programs, a ban on assault weapons that people said could never be passed over the opposition of the NRA.

And at the end of last year, according to nonpartisan sources, we had the best first year in working with Congress of any presidency since the end of World War II, except the Eisenhower first year and President Johnson's first year, which were about the same. And if I may be forgiven a little bit of bragging rights, I think the things we tried to do in the atmosphere in which we tried to do them were far more difficult.

So we are trying to make government work. I say that to say that, yes, there have been some good results. And a lot of them are because you did a lot of work in the 1980s and the early '90s to become more productive and to be more competitive. And in the first

16 months of this administration, over three million new jobs in the private sector came into this economy -- two-and-a-half time as many than in the previous four years alone. We had the first quarter of this year, the first time in well over a decade, when there was no bank failure in a quarter. There were more incorporations of new businesses than at any time since World War II in 1993.

But I will say again, we can do these things, and unless we also empower our people to deal with the challenges of the global economy, as we did with the G.I. Bill, we're going to have a tough time.

With your help and support, a lot of things have already been done. A bigger and better Head Start program will improve the quality of the program and serve 40,000 more children this year and 90,000 more children next year than were being served previously. Goals 2000 will link grass-roots reform with world-class standards for our public schools -- the first time we have ever had any national standards for achievement.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act will help high school students learn real skills and provide America with better trained, higher-skilled workers. Student loan reforms, which the Secretary of Education, who's here, has done so much to administer, will make it possible for 20 million American students to repay their loans -- some \$50 billion of them -- on more favorable terms and make it possible for students in the future to borrow money to go to college at lower interest rates and better repayment terms. But it will make it harder for them to avoid paying their bills.

These things are very hopeful signs. The National Service Program, Americorps, will make it possible for 20,000 young people to serve their country at the grass-roots level and earn money to go to college this year; the year after next, 100,000 young Americans doing that. The Peace Corps in it's largest year had 16,000 Americans serving. This National Service Program literally has the potential to change the way our young people think about themselves, their country and their role as citizens.

So many of you have helped us on all these issues. And this summer, we're going to have two or three more things I want to ask you to help us on. First of all, as I go to the G-7 conference, there will be a lot of discussion about GATT. Everybody that I know sort of treats GATT as if it's already done. But as you know, the Congress has not yet passed the enabling legislation. I will submit that legislation implementing the agreement this summer. We have worked very, very hard on meeting the strict budget rules to find a way to pay for GATT. You and I know GATT will make the government money, but under our budget rules, we have to pretend that it's going to cost us money because we're getting rid of tariffs.

I want to urge you in the strongest possible terms, do everything you can to persuade the Congress to give this high priority, to pass it with as little controversy and as little delay as possible and to move on it this year. Only the United States of all our trading partners has to go through the budget hoops we do to pass GATT. All of our trading partners look at me and say, you're the person that got us all together and made us do this last year; how can you not ratify it? We need your help, and we must do it this year, not next year.

Secondly, I ask for your help to pass the reemployment

act which will change the whole way our unemployment system works. It will turn a bewildering array of training programs into a system where workers who lose their jobs can present themselves at a one-stop service center, and get the guidance, the training opportunities and the information they need for real jobs in the private sector. The boards that supervise these programs will be controlled by people who know most about the opportunities, the private sector. And I want Congress to enact that this year. This is very, very important.

The average person does not go back to the job from which he or she is laid off, but the unemployment system is still built on the premise that they do. The consequence of that is that employers pay too much in unemployment for people to just hang around on the system instead of prepared to take new jobs and employees spend too much time doing just that instead of moving more quickly into a new economy. We can change this, but we need to do it this year.

Let me finally say that, on this issue, a lot of you have expressed support to me personally for the welfare reform efforts, whether that can pass this year or not depends upon how much fire it catches in Congress and how much controversy we can avoid in how to fund it. But we have to change the culture of welfare. And this program that I have presented to Congress, along with the others that have been presented, go right at the heart of parents who don't pay child support they owe, to the heart of the teen pregnancy problem, to the heart of requiring people to work once they have the skills to do so. And I hope you will continue to support that.

Now, despite all these efforts, I have to tell you that I do not believe that the American people, as individuals, will be able to embrace the changes of the global economy, and successful workers, unless and until we address the health care crisis.

This goes to the heart of our debate on all of the other things in the strategy I outlined. It goes to the heart of whether we can get our own economic house in order, it goes to the heart of whether we can make government work from ordinary people, it goes to the heart of whether we can empower people to view change as a friend instead of an enemy. Unless we can provide coverage for every American in a reform system which focuses on both quality and control of costs, the deficit will grow, your costs will continue to grow and undermine productivity, and more and more Americans will lose their coverage or be at risk.

Let me briefly discuss this whole thing from my point of view, from your point of view, and from the American citizen's point of view -- from a worker's point of view.

From my point of view, as the President in charge of the budget, I've worked hard to get this deficit down for three years in a row for the first time since Truman was President. I have done things that people who say they're more conservative than me talk about but don't do. We're eliminating over 100 government programs. We're cutting 200 others. We're reducing discretionary spending for the first time in 25 years, and still with the discipline to increase investment in education and new technologies and training. We have reduced defense all we can reduce it. And I think we are right at the margin, and we should not reduce it any more, given the challenges we face in this economy.

A lot of you will probably be called to testify or to

support the work of Senator Kerrey, Senator Danforth and others in this entitlements commission, because you know that the only thing that is increasing our deficit now is entitlements. Keep in mind, when you strip all that away, some of the entitlements are going down; Social Security is going up only with the rate of inflation, and is roughly the same percentage of our GDP it was 20 years ago. The only part of the entitlements going up much more rapidly than inflation are Medicare and Medicaid -- the government's programs for the elderly and the poor.

And I can tell you that unless we can bring them in line with inflation, we will be forced to either let the deficit go up again, raise taxes more than we should, or cut our investment in public investment -- in things you support -- to a dangerously low level in a global economy. So that's what it looks like from my point of view just from a budget perspective.

From your point of view, you know already that the government does not reimburse Medicare and Medicaid providers at 100 percent of cost, so the costs are being shifted to you. The other people who are shifting costs to you are businesses and employers who do not have health insurance but who get health care. They are shifting the cost to you.

Now, if our deficit goes up, and we have to bring the deficit down, and we cut Medicare and Medicaid without fundamental reform, we're going to shift more cost to you. And you will be put in the position of paying more or covering less. Keep in mind -- in the last three years, three million American workers have lost their health insurance. There are three million more Americans without health coverage today than there were three years ago. You are also paying for them in cost shifting.

So unless we have comprehensive reform, you will be put in the position of some day coming to the end of how much you can do managing your health care costs on your own, which you've done a very good job of, almost all of you. And you will be facing the cost shift coming at you from the federal government and from the increasing numbers of employers who don't provide any coverage.

Now, the third and most important thing of all -- what does this look like if you're out there working in this country and you hadn't had much of a pay increase in the last 10 years; but you know that your country's becoming more competitive; and you're excited about the 21st century; and you know that you're raising children who will have to change jobs eight times in a lifetime? What are you going to do?

If you're a man and you have a premature heart attack, or your wife gets breast cancer, your kid develops some strange disease, and you have a preexisting condition? And you're being told it's a brave new world out there -- don't worry if you have to change jobs, just get some new retraining; you'll do fine. And then it turns out nobody wants to hire you because you've got a preexisting condition.

Oh, I know there are those who say we can just legislate these things. We'll just legislate the insurance reforms, say you can't discriminate against anybody, and it will be fixed. Look at the study that many of my adversaries in the Congress on this issue keep citing -- the Lewin VHI study. They say that all you can get out of insurance reforms is coverage in the short run for 2.2 million

more people. They say that if you -- you look at the experience of New York that tried to mandate insurance reforms alone. What happens, a lot of people's insurance goes up, and a lot more people opt out of the system.

I say, if you look at the rest of the world and you look at us, we have 81 million Americans out of a population of only 255 million, 81 million of us live in families with people who have preexisting conditions. But they all still need to be able to change work seven times in a lifetime.

Thirty-nine million of us do not have health insurance. There is no compelling evidence that we can both have quality and cost control and stop cost-shifting in the absence of covering everyone. There is no compelling evidence. The Lewin VHI study, so often cited by those who say, well, we could get 91 percent coverage in America, up from 83 percent, covering 97 percent of the cost of health care if only we did this stuff, which doesn't require employer mandates or of some other universal coverage. That's being talked about. But if you notice, there's not been a bill really pushing that.

Why? Because when you strip it away, you see that it costs literally hundreds of billions of dollars over the next five or six years to finance that in massive subsidies which basically benefit poor people, most of whom are not working, some of whom are working, and does nothing for middle-class workers. Which means to do that, instead of an employer mandate, we would have to go back and raise the heck out of everybody's taxes, which we are not about to do. At that level it would not be fair.

Now, how is it that every other advanced country in the world and all of our competitors -- we're only too happy to learn from our competitors in every other way, and we're very proud when we beat our competitors. And I don't know how many of you have told me personally, we're better now than anybody else in the world at what we do. We went through all kinds of agonies in the '80s and we faced all these challenges, and now we're better than our competitors.

Well, our competitors, not a single, solitary one of them, spends more than 10 percent of GDP on health care; we spend 14 percent, and we're the only people that can't figure out how to cover everybody. Now, I refuse to declare defeat. Why should we jump in the tank?

I heard the messages about what people didn't like about our original proposal. Don't put restrictions on experimental drugs; don't make businesses go into alliances if they don't want to; let it be voluntary. People know their own interests. Let multistate businesses have an approach which makes sense for all their employers. We're making the changes that we heard people complain about. Those changes are being made. We know we needed to make some changes.

But if you remember, when I offered my health care plan, I said, this is not the end all and be all; it's the beginning of a debate. But what we need to decide is whether we're going to walk away from this session of Congress without the debate. Harry Truman said 50 years ago, Americans will never be secure unless we did something about health care. Everybody thinks of Harry Truman now as the fount of all wisdom. I come from a family that liked him when he was unpopular. (Laughter.) But most Americans didn't like him too

much at the time. He kept telling them uncomfortable truths. He was right 50 years ago, and it's still true. So, yes, we need to make some changes in the original proposal I made. We put them out there.

But what we need is a quick, honest, forthright debate. We need to deal with this issue this year because, until we do, we will continue to spend a higher percentage on health care than our competitors; you will continue to have costs shifted to you; your government will continue to face the agonizing choice of continuing to spend more and more of your tax money on entitlements, less on investment, and still increasing the deficit and still shifting costs to you.

So, I ask you, enter the debate and just tell people what you have to do every day in your own businesses. You get a real hard decision. If you don't want the thing to collapse, you can't walk away. And almost always, you make a decision that is less than perfect but is better than making no decision.

So I ask you, help me pass the reemployment bill. Help us pass GATT. Help us pass welfare reform. But don't walk away from health care. The numbers are big; they're enormous. And we can't tell an average American, can't tell a mother on welfare, get off of welfare and take a job so you can lose your children's health insurance and start paying taxes for people to pay for their kids' health care who stayed on welfare.

We can't tell a worker, give up your job security and find a new security in your mind, in your ability to learn and change, if your illness or the illness of someone in your family will put you out of the job market. We must not ask people to choose between being good parents and good workers. We cannot ask people to risk their children's health to participate in the global economy.

And most importantly, we can't just keep working with a system that is fundamentally flawed that we can fix. We can look around the world; we know there are all kinds of fixes here. We may have to do more for small business; I'm willing to do that. We may have to do more, and we should, to make the thing less regulatory; I've already made a lot of those changes. But let us not walk away.

When I spoke at Normandy a couple of weeks ago, in the greatest honor of Presidency, to represent our country in commemorating the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the thing that overwhelmed me about that was that people did what they had to do because there was no option; and they measured up and literally saved the world. And that, in that moment, there was no option to be cynical. There was no luxury available for people to avoid the decisions before them, and they did not have the option to be cynical.

Today, I tell you, we have fundamental decisions to make about what kind of people are going to be into the future. Walking away is an option that's not really there. Being cynical or negative is always an option that's there, but it's something we pay a terrible price for. This country can do what we have to do. We have to be what the people that led the D-Day invasion were; they were called pathfinders -- the people that went first. That's what we're being asked to do.

You live in an age which glorifies commerce and success and international trade more than any other in the lifetime of

anybody in this room. Therefore, you have enormous responsibilities. And you have to light the path to the future in the way that the GI Bill did 50 years ago. We can do it. We can do it -- if we make the right choices. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

1:28 P.M. EDT