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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 2, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENT/ROUNDTABLE

The East Room

general

2:48 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Let me welcome all of you here to the East Room of the White House today for this very important announcement and this important roundtable. And by extension, let me welcome Mayor Susan Hammer and the CEO of Netscape, Jim Barksdale, and others who are with us via satellite today from the Stonegate School in San Jose, California.

In my State of the Union address, I said that the greatest step our country must take to prepare for the 21st century is to ensure that all of our people have the best education in the world -- that every 8-year-old can read, that every 12-year-old can log onto the Internet, that every 18-year-old can go on to college, that every American adult can continue to learn for a lifetime.

But the most important thing of all is that we know whether we are learning what we need to know. And that requires something America has put off doing for too long: the embracing of a genuine commitment to national standards of learning for our young people. I have challenged every state to embrace national standards and to participate in 1999 in an examination to see whether our children have met those standards for 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math.

Today, America's largest school system and leaders of its most forward-leaning high tech industries have joined together to put California alongside Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, and our military schools in the support of the national standards movement. I thank Delaine Eastin. I thank the 200 high tech executives who have supported this. And I thank them for their pledge not just to announce their support today, but to write every governor, every school board, every state education leader and ask them to participate in the standards crusade.

It has been less than two months since I called on every state to adopt high national standards. Today, with California's endorsement, states and school systems that educate nearly 20 percent of America's school children are now on the road to measuring their students against those high standards. If any state understands the challenges we face in the 21st century in the global economy in an Information Age, it is surely California, our gateway to much of the world and the home of many of the industries that will shape our future.

California and all of you who are here today and all of those in California today have given powerful new momentum to the crusade for national education standards. Education and business leaders, Republicans and Democrats and independents, people all committed to seeing politics stop at the schoolhouse door in America have no stopping place in tomorrow's world.

I want to thank everyone who has made this possible. I thank especially Secretary Riley for his work and the Vice President in particular for the work he did to put this group together today. This is a very, very happy day for me personally, but more importantly, for the cause of educational advancement and reform and standards.

And now I'd like to call on the California Superintendent of Public Education, Delaine Eastin, for any remarks you might like to make.

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THE PRESIDENT: Jim, it's President Clinton. I'd like to thank you for being there and thank Congresswoman Lofgren and my good friend Mayor Susan Hammer.

I'd like to ask you to amplify just a moment on a point that John Doerr made when he was introducing you, when he pointed out that just the 240 companies who have endorsed this national standards movement today have created 130,000 jobs in the last four years and have thousands of job openings now waiting to be filled.

We have tried very hard in this administration to create a climate and an environment and to pursue policies which would permit us to increase the number of high wage, good future jobs so that we could raise incomes, average incomes in America again.

I think it would be helpful if you would just state explicitly from your point of view what the relationship is in having citizens, young people educated according to high national standards and filling those jobs with young Americans and raising our average income. Because I think that's one thing the American people haven't clearly focused on, the extent to which our ability to create high-wage jobs in the end depends upon our ability to produce people who can fill those jobs once they're created.

And I wish you would talk about it just a little bit.

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THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Let me just make one other brief point about this, and put it against one of our other big national challenges -- our effort to reform the welfare system and to limit the amount of time that able-bodied people spend on public assistance and to maximize their movement into the work force.

You have this unbelievable situation today where in some of our cities -- St. Louis and Chicago come to mind because we've had studies there in the last 18 months -- there are six to nine applicants for every entry level job that opens up. And yet, you look around the country and there are tens of thousands of the kinds of jobs that the industries represented in this room and out in San Jose have opened and made available right now that cannot be filled.

So it is obvious, to take this one step further, that we'll never really answer the whole welfare reform challenge and move people from dependence to independence until we can demonstrate to employers that we have educated all of our young people, even our poorest young people, at a level of international acceptance.

I'd like to go on now and talk to two people here who really represent our children, and give them a chance to make a couple of remarks. Let me begin with Carmen Cortez, who is a first grade teacher from the Olive Street School in Porterville, California. She's been a reading specialist and an elementary school teacher for 30 years -- I find that hard to believe -- (laughter) --but ever since she was eight years old she's been an elementary school teacher. (Laughter.) And she's a member of California's statewide coordinating committee on standards.

I'd like to begin by asking her the question that we often get asked, which is that is it realistic for us to expect that we can set standards that are at once high and meaningful and, secondly, that can be achieved by virtually all of our students in a country with such a diverse student body -- not only diverse racially and ethnically, but also economically. Is that realistic? And I'd like for you to talk about it based on your experience.

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THE PRESIDENT: Let me just -- I'd like to emphasize what Carmen said -- the most important thing she said. Keep in mind now, here's somebody who has been teaching our children for 30 years. I am so sick and tired of people assuming on the front end that children's learning is limited because of their racial, their ethnic or their income background, or whether they live in some poor rural area or some isolated inner-city.

Their conditions create greater hurdles for them. We should clear away the hurdles, but we should not lower our expectations. When we lower our expectations of those kids, we're selling them down the river, we are not doing our jobs as adults. It is our job to be the shepherds for their future, to bring them into a better future.

To me, the most important thing that's been said here today by anybody is a person who has been an educator for 30 years saying that when I have high expectations for these children I find that they meet those expectations. And I think that's important. (Applause.)

I think we ought to hear from the parent who is here, too. We have Lydia Perez Howard (phonetic), parent of a 3rd grade daughter who attends Cleveland Elementary School in Pasadena, California. She's the vice president of the PTA and active on the school advisory council and the neighborhood strengthening project. And I'd like to ask her to talk about how she feels about this whole standards movement and her daughter's future and how it will affect it.

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THE PRESIDENT: Let me say why I think Lydia's comments are so important. In the end, whatever we do in the schools needs to be reinforced by what the children hear at home. And we learned a lot over the last, oh, 12 or 13 years, since the issuance in 1984 of the Nation At Risk report.

But one of the most important things that I learned in all these years I was working as a governor on standards and educational improvement is that in the United States there were too many parents who tended to believe that their children's performance in school was largely due to their income or their racial or ethnic background or whether English was their first language. And in a lot of other cultures that we're competing with, they believe their children's performance in school is directly related to effort and the level of support they get from the parents at home.

And it seems to me that you can have a debate if you want about what you think is right, or is it 90 percent one and 10 percent the other; but there is only one attitude likely to produce positive results for the children, and that is to believe that what children learn is largely the function of effort and the level of support they get in the home. So when the parents say something like what Lydia has said, it seems to me profoundly important.

The other thing I'd like to say -- you say you came up in the schools of the Bronx in a different time. It put me in mind of something else that's especially important to California. This country has been built by generation after generation of immigrants who came to this country and believed that their children would do better than they did and would fully participate in the American Dream. I would argue there were two elements to that. One is the immigrants worked like crazy, saved, and gave their kids a better life. Second, their kids had a good education and were assimilated into the mainstream of American life.

We are becoming an evermore pluralistic society. And more and more of our immigrants are people who desperately need not only for the working age parents to have the chance to get good jobs and build a good future, but for those children to have that future, too. We cannot become the country we ought to become as a multi-ethnic, multi-racial democracy in

a world that will value that enormously in the absence of a good educational system.

And again, I say having teachers who believe in high expectations and having parents who believe that if their schools work properly and have high expectations, they will support that and they will tell their children that what they learn will be a function of effort more than I.Q. -- those two things will count more than anything else the rest of us will do. Then all of us have to do is show up, do our part, and create the system that will enable those kinds of teachers, those kinds of parents, and those kinds of children to succeed. So I think we ought to give our teacher and our parent another hand. I think they did a great job. (Applause.)

I'd like to ask the Secretary of Education, who has been my friend and colleague on this for nearly 20 years now, to talk a little bit about what we're doing to try to work with the states to get the standards movement up and going and, specifically, to prepare the 4th grade reading and the 8th grade math examination by 1999 so that it meets the standards that Delaine Eastin and others in other states would expect it to.

Mr. Secretary.

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THE PRESIDENT: I'd like to leave everyone with this one final point, and then I'd like to call on the Vice President to close the meeting, to tie something together that Secretary Riley talked about, and what Lydia Perez-Howard and what Carmen Cortez said about the students, and obviously what Delaine said earlier, and going back to something Jim Barksdale said about how everything that he's involved in, he has to meet standards.

I think it's important to make a distinction over and over again about what the difference is between what we propose here and what tests are in the classroom normally. We are striving for what you would call in manufacturing a "zero-defect result," which means we want to set high standards that will guarantee 100 percent of the children, whether they graduate at the top of their class or at the bottom or somewhere in the middle, that they'll still have what they need to go on with their lives and make a success of it and to make our country strong. Which means that, in a given class, a student could make the highest grade in the class, but if the student doesn't achieve the standards it's still not good enough; and in another class, even a student who might have the lowest grade in the class would still be a good successful performing learner and know that he or she can have a good future and has been given a good education. That is the important thing.

Furthermore, these examinations are not being given to label anybody a failure, but to give everybody a benchmark on which they can build to success. Of course not everybody will do well the first time they're given, but we have to know what the benchmark is. we have to know what the roadmap is.

But I just want to emphasize that again: If parents have the attitudes that we heard from Lydia, if teachers have the attitude we heard from Carmen, and states have the leadership that we heard from Delaine, from John Doerr, from all the folks out in San Jose today, we can achieve virtually a zero-defect society from an educational point of view and give our children the future they need. And especially states that are on the cutting edge of the future, both in terms of being highly pluralistic and having those new jobs of tomorrow, places like California will be the greatest beneficiaries.

So I think it's important that we go out there and talk about this, so that everyone understands exactly what we mean. These are different from what most people think of as classroom tests, and we need to hammer that home. We believe all these kids can clear the bar, and we're determined to see that they do it.

END

3:25 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 10, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON EDUCATION STANDARDS

The Rose Garden

11:24 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Let me say, first of all, I'm glad to be here with Pat Forgione, the Commissioner for the National Center for Educational Statistics. I thank him for the fine work that he has done. I thank the educators who are here: Linda Vieth, Lourdes Monegudo and Sharon Simpson. I thank Secretary Riley for his excellent work. And I want to thank all of those out in the audience who have done so much to make this day come to pass -- those who were introduced, the leaders of the NEA and the AFT and the other education groups who are here. All of you, thank you very much for being here.

Today is a good day for American education. Today, we announce the new results from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study for 4th Graders, showing that America's 4th graders are performing above the national average in math and science. In fact, in science they are doing very well, indeed. According to this report, just issued today, our 4th graders rank second in the world in the Third International Math and Science Tests, just behind Korea. We are making great strides. We've built a solid foundation in our national effort to establish standards of excellence in education.

In 1989 and '90, when I was a governor, I worked with the other governors in the White House and the Department of Education to establish national education goals. I remember the night we spent staying up all night at the University of Virginia, asking ourselves whether we should have a goal in math and science and, if so, what should it be. You remember, don't you? We were up all night long and people said to me, there's no way in the world we can have a goal that we should be first in the world of math and science because we have a more diverse population, we have more poor children, we don't have uniformity of -- so I remember looking at the person who made the argument -- it was a perfectly sane and rational argument -- I said, well, what do you want me to say, we're going to be third in the world in math and science? That's our goal? We'll be fourth, we'll be eighth? So we decided we would embrace the goal that we would be first.

These 4th grade examinations proved that if our educators, our parents, our schools, the rest of us in a supporting role, if we all do the right thing, that our children can achieve if we give them the chance to do it, and if we have high expectations for them. So, again, I want to say, I thank the educators that are here. And I think that if you look at where we were -- just in 1991, there as a test similar to the TIMSS test in which our 4th graders were below average in math, above average in science, but nowhere near where they are today. So this shows you what can happen in a few short years if people are working together for the right things for our children and the future of this country.

So I just want to say again to all those who were serving with me -- the Republicans and Democrats alike who were governors back then -- I still think we did the right thing, and now we have to do what it takes to make sure we meet the goal. We have to have the conviction that every child in America can learn. And we have to know that this report proves that we don't have to settle for second class expectations or second class goals.

Now, we also have to remember that we've got a long way to go. Last November, when Secretary Riley and Commissioner Forgione released the first results from the 8th grade test, we found that we were above the international average in science, but still below the international average in mathematics. That is why I have asked us to begin not just participating in the TIMSS test with a few thousand of our students, but to voluntarily embrace national standards beginning with reading and mathematics; and begin with examinations that would embrace every child in America with 4th grade reading and 8th grade math by 1999.

Since I issued that call, six states -- education leaders or governors -- in Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, California, West Virginia and Massachusetts, along with the Department of Defense Schools, have adopted this plan of embracing national standards and agreeing to participate in the testing program. I'm pleased to announce today that the state of Kentucky is joining the national standards movement, becoming the sixth state to agree to participate in the examinations. And I want to especially thank Governor Paul Patton, who has been a national leader in education, for joining in this endeavor.

The results today give us a road map to higher performance. In no other country in the world did performance in math drop from above average in 4th grade to below average in 8th grade. That didn't happen anywhere else -- which means that we are doing a very good job in the early grades, but we've got a lot more work to do in the later ones. We know parents have to remain involved in their children's education as they move through schools, not withdraw when their children reach adolescence. We know our curriculum will have to be more focused and more demanding. We know we'll have to hold all of our students to higher standards as they grow older and measure the schools and the students against the standards.

As the school year comes to a close, I want to thank the many thousands of parents and teachers, principals who have done the hard work necessary to achieve these positive results. They have told us over and over and over again that if we can redouble our efforts, especially now in middle school and high schools, we can meet our goals of national excellence. Bipartisan

progress on education shows what we can accomplish here in Washington, too, when we reach across party lines -- to balance the budget, but to invest more in the education of our young people, as well as our adults who need more access to education.

So let me just say before I go on to make one or two more points, there are a lot of people who never believed the United States children would score in the top two in the world on any of these international tests. And now, they know that they were wrong and they underestimated our children, underestimated our teachers, underestimated our schools, underestimated our parents. But let's not kid ourselves: we are still nowhere near where we need to be in these other areas, and all this 4th grade test does is to show us that we can be the best in the world if we simply believe it and then organize ourselves to achieve it.

This ought to be a clear challenge to every single state that has not yet come forward to agree to participate in the national standards movement and the test in 1999 that they ought to do it. We don't have to hide anymore, we don't have to be afraid of the results anymore. We're not trying to punish anybody; we're trying to lift the children of this country up, and the TIMSS test proves that they will lift themselves up if we who are adults and in charge of their future do what we ought to do to give them a chance to do it. And I hope all of you will take that message out across the country now.

Let me finally say that whether we in the national government continue to do our part for education depends upon our good faith in implementing the budget agreement that overwhelming majorities of both parties have voted for, and specifically what we do with the tax portion of the agreement -- which overwhelming majorities agree would be used to help working families to pay for education, to buy and sell a home, to raise their children. That is fair to all Americans.

Yesterday, the Republican Majority on the House Ways and Means Committee released their plan to fill in the details of the tax cut agreed to by the Congress and by me. I have reviewed this plan and I believe that in its present form, it does not meet the tests that I would hold myself to: one, being faithful to the Budget Agreement; second, having a tax cut that will grow the economy; third, having a tax cut that is fair to middle-class families; and, fourth, having a tax cut that genuinely helps to increase the quality and volume of education in America today for people of all ages. I do not believe it meets those tests for the following reasons.

Number one, it falls \$13 billion short in the amount of higher education tax cuts specifically agreed to in the balanced budget agreement. We agreed to roughly \$35 billion. You might say that \$34 billion is roughly \$35 billion, but \$22 billion is not -- not even roughly \$35 billion -- (laughter) -- and if that were a question in the 4th grade TIMSS test, I'm quite sure what the answer would be. (Laughter and applause.)

Second, it short-changes those in the work force who want to gain new skills and those who want to go on to community colleges. Those who go to less expensive schools, like community colleges, would have the HOPE Scholarship I proposed specifically agreed to in the

Budget Agreement, cut in half by the House plan.

Third, the plan falls short for working families in other ways. I favor a \$500 per child tax credit. We have people favoring the \$500 per child tax credit all the way from the most liberal coalitions in the Democratic caucus to the Christian Coalition. But I want to make it even more fair. I think it ought to be refundable, so it's fair to working parents with lower incomes. Instead, the Republican plan would deny the full child tax credit to millions of the hardest pressed working families simply because it is not refundable. And they would deduct the availability of the child's tax credit from the earned income tax credit that lower income working families already earn.

Moreover, and unbelievably to me, they would reduce tax benefits to working families where both the father and the mother are working and paying for child care and getting some credit for that -- they want to deduct the child tax credit from the credit people already get to pay for child care, apparently, designed to make it more difficult for people who are parents to work outside the home. I think most working families will tell you, it's hard enough already; what we'd like is a little help raising our children. I do not believe we should discriminate against parents who are working and raising their children in the availability of the children's tax credit.

In short, the tax plan cuts in half the tax cuts for those who go to community college. It short changes 6 million families who are already in the work force and having to pay for their child care. That does not meet the standards of fairness to families and promotion of education. Nor do I believe it is consistent with the budget agreement. So I hope that the House Democrats and Republicans and the Senate Democrats and Republicans will work with us to meet those tests.

Finally, let me just say one other thing. The people of the Dakotas and Minnesota earned the great compassion and concern of all Americans because of what they went through this year. We've worked hard to help them stave off the worst, to get their communities back together, to rebuild. It has been 80 days since I forwarded to Congress my request for disaster relief to allow the process of recovery to begin.

Instead of giving me a disaster relief bill, the Congressional Majority insisted on weighing it down with a political wish list. In the name of the people who have had to face the floods, in the name of the families who suffered and need their help now, I ask the Majority to put aside the political games to set aside the political wish list -- we can negotiate on all this later -- and, instead, just send me a straightforward disaster relief bill. Again, I believe if this were a question on an elementary school exam, 90 percent of the 4th graders in America would say: do the right thing and have your political arguments later.

So as we celebrate today, let's do the right thing and resolve that we're not going to stop until we get those TIMSS tests and we're first in the world at the 4th grade level, at the 8th grade level, at the 12th grade level. Our 4th graders have proved that we can do it. We dare not let them and the other children of this country down.



Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

11:37 A.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 21, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COLLEGE READING TUTOR ANNOUNCEMENT

Garrison Elementary School
Washington, D.C.

11:25 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you, General Becton, for the introduction. Thank you, Principal Andrea Robinson, for making the First Lady and me feel so very welcome here in Garrison today. Delegate Norton, Mr. Mayor, all the college presidents who are here -- some out in the audience, but especially those here behind me who are part of our announcement today: Dr. Ladner of American University, Brother Patrick Ellis of Catholic, Dr. I. King Jordan of Gallaudet, Father Leo O'Donovan of Georgetown, Steven Trachtenberg of George Washington, Pat McGuire of Trinity, Patrick Swygert of Howard.

To the Council members who are here today, Hilda Mason and Harry Thomas, Judge Hamilton. To the School Board members who are here and others who are here who are part of our endeavor. I would like to especially acknowledge the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Jim Billington; the Secretary of Education, Secretary Dick Riley; Carol Rasco, the National Director of our America Reads program; Frank Raines, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and Harris Wofford, who heads our national service program.

I'd also like to thank Dr. Robert Corrigan from San Francisco State University, who is here. He and Father O'Donovan are two of the 21 steering committee members for our national effort to get volunteers in colleges all over America involved in helping our children to read. So I'm delighted to be here with this distinguished assemblage.

Two weeks ago in my State of the Union address I spoke of the importance of renewing our great Capital City to make it the finest place to learn, to work, to live; to make it once again the proud face America shows to the world. This is a city of truly remarkable strengths. I saw that when I lived here as a student so very many years ago now. I see it now, having come back as President. We see the majesty of the monuments, the beauty of the parks, the commitment of

community and business leaders. But most importantly, we see it in the eyes of our children.

I was just in Stephanie Abney's 1st grade class, where Hillary and I read The Tortoise and the Hare to the students, and they could have been reading it back to us. And I thought about those wonderful children and all the others who are here. They deserve the best future we can give them, and we can give them a better future. And that is what this is all about. (Applause.)

As the First Lady said, this endeavor will require us to be more like the tortoise than the hare. We will have to move slowly but deliberately, and we will not be able to sit down and rest. But if we do that, like the tortoise, we will win the race. This is our city. All of us who live here, all of us who work here, all of us who want America's Capital to be a world capital, second to none; all of us have an obligation to work with the Mayor, with General Becton, with the Control Board, with Delegate Norton, with all the leaders of the city to help to renew and to revitalize Washington, D.C.

I pledge to you today that we, my personal family and my official family, will be with you as you make those efforts, every step of the way. (Applause.)

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to three people who have been particularly important to me in this endeavor: first, to the First Lady who has been telling me for a long time that we had to do more, we owed it to Washington to do more -- (applause.)

Second, to Frank Raines, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget who came up with the proposal we have made to relieve the District of Columbia of some of its unfair and unnecessary financial burdens and reallocate responsibility among the state and federal government. (Applause.)

And third to a -- I didn't know if she was here with us today, but I finally spotted her in the audience -- to Carol Thompson Cole, thank you very much for all that you have done to help us to get this effort off the ground. (Applause.)

So we've made this proposal to the Congress to relieve the District government of some of its financial burdens. As I have said many times, one of the major problems of the District of Columbia is that it has too often been a "not quite" place. It's not quite a state, but it's not quite a city. So it has been loaded up with responsibilities that normally are only borne by states. I think that is wrong, and I think we should do better about that.

To strengthen the city's economic base, we also must provide some financial incentives for people to move businesses and to move themselves back into the city. We must expand the empowerment approach that has worked so well across the country. In Detroit, one of our empowerment zone cities, the unemployment rate was cut in half in four years -- in half -- and investment was flooding back, business was coming back, people were coming back to live in the city. We can do this in every city in America, and we must.

To help home rule succeed, we have to change the relationship between the District and our nation's government. Sometimes the District gets the worst of all worlds. It's not quite independent, but the dependencies it has carry burdens that cannot be borne by any community. So we need to work that out.

But let's not kid ourselves, there are some things that have to be done here that must be done by the people of the District of Columbia. And the two that are most important in my view are making the schools work for these children and making the streets safe for them to walk and live on. (Applause.)

What I want to say to you today is that I know you can do this. I have been not only here at Garrison, but I have been in the Kramer Junior High School in Anacostia, which has been adopted by my Secret Service detail -- it's one of the presents they gave me for a birthday once -- best present I could ever be given by my Secret Service detail. And they go to Kramer -- they're in there all the time. And I get regular reports about the progress they're making. I have been to Thomas Jefferson Junior High School, which is near the Capitol, probably five times in the last 10 years. I've been to Eastern High School and to a number of other schools in the District. You can do this. This school system can be great for all of its children, and what we want to do is to help.

I'd also like to say that you can do the other things you have to do, too. Public safety can succeed here. I started the week in Boston, where no child has been murdered in a year and a half -- not a single child in a year and a half, not one. (Applause.) And no manna dropped from Heaven, no outside force lifted them up. They did some things together, in a disciplined, organized, determined way that changed the future of children. And now it can be done everywhere. So I am hopeful.

But let's begin with education. All of you know that the world we are moving toward will put a higher premium on education than ever before. It has always been important. A certain amount of it has always been essential for people to get along in life. It is now more critical than ever before not only for the individual futures of every one of these little kids here, but for how the rest of us do as well. For the skeptics who are about my age, I could only say that we ought to be working hard to give these children a good education so they will support us in our old age -- (laughter) -- in a style that we'll be comfortable with.

We can only be a strong, united community if we can educate all our people. If you look around -- just look at these children today. America is building the most genuinely diverse democracy in all of human history. No one has ever tried to do this before, and we did it almost without thinking, just by being a nation of successive waves of immigrants. We became more and more and more diverse. And by continuing to advance the cause of civil rights and civil liberties, we've made different people more and more and more at home in our country. And then all of a sudden we wake up on the edge of the 21st century with four school districts in our

country where children's native tongues number more than 100 -- in four different school districts.

This is a great challenge because all children, even of the same race and the same religious background, as every teacher could tell you, are different. All children are different anyway. And when you think of this diversity we have to manage, it's even a greater challenge. But it's also the greatest opportunity that has ever been served up to any people in human history. And if we seize that opportunity, if we prove that all of our children can learn and they can all be given opportunities and they can all make a contribution, we will be richly rewarded.

We know that there are some remarkable success stories in the District of Columbia, and we know the District's schools have to do better. That's why I am so grateful that, after a lifetime of service to his nation, General Becton has taken on yet another important challenge and a true act of patriotism. We are committed to supporting him.

We know that we have to mobilize people from all walks of life, and I was glad to hear all the different volunteer groups recognized, particularly the seniors and the Vista volunteers and, of course, a great personal pride of mine, the AmeriCorps volunteers. And I thank some of them who are here today, and I thank them for being here.

We need to start with simple, clear goals that we know are important, number one, and, number two, that we can determine whether we have met. One of the real problems that I find in all human endeavors is that sometimes we don't clarify our goals and make sure we're going after the important ones. And then sometimes, even if we've got a good goal, we set it up so we never can tell whether we've met it or not.

One of our goals has to be to make sure every 8-year-old in this country can read a book on his or her own, and every 8-year-old in this school, and every 8-year-old in this city can do the same in the next four years. That is a very important thing, and we can find out whether that is being done. (Applause.)

The Secretary of Education and I intend to make it possible for states and the District, by the year 1999, to give an examination to every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to see whether they know what they're supposed to know, based on national basic standards. And so we will know whether every 8-year-olds can read in 1999. And we are being given a few years to get the job done. We also know that these children can do the job if they're given the support, the discipline, the love that they need.

But today, in America as a whole, 40 percent -- four of every ten 8-year-olds -- cannot read as well as they should read. Now, part of that is because so many of them's first language is not English. But a lot of it is because -- indeed, the lion's share of it is because they simply are not learning as they should. Many times the teachers have more than they can do. Many times the teachers don't have the support they need for all the different challenges that the children

bring into the classroom in their early lives. Many times, as General Becton indicated, we need more help from the parents at home. Many times the parents themselves need help to learn to read well enough to read to their children.

So we know that this is a complicated problem. That does not, however, relieve us of the burden of solving it. In fact, what it does is impose upon more of us the responsibility to help to solve it. One of things -- I'm glad to see my friend Bill Miliken (phonetic) here and I was glad to hear General Becton recognize the Cities and Communities in Schools Program because they have for years -- in small rural cities in my home state and in big urban places like Washington -- tried to remind the community that our children are everyone's responsibility and there must be a community approach to dealing with this.

And that's what we're here to talk about today with regard to a simple but profoundly important goal -- that every 8-year-olds must be able to read independently. We intend to use thousands of AmeriCorps volunteers to mobilize and train a citizen army of one million reading tutors. We want at least 100,000 college students to help, to build our army of reading tutors on college campuses all across America. That's what the America Reads program Secretary Riley and Carol Rasco are spearheading is all about.

Last fall, I worked with the Congress to create over 200,000 new work-study jobs on America's college campuses, the program that enables young people to work their way through college. My present budget calls for another 100,000 work-study positions to be made available to our college campuses. I want a portion of those new positions to be devoted to community service -- to letting people work not just on the campus, but, more importantly, in the community and especially teaching our children to read.

College presidents nationwide have answered the call. Many of them are here today -- the local college presidents behind me, others in the audience. They have pledged thousands of their work-study students and thousands who do not receive work-study assistance to serve for one year as reading tutors.

The District of Columbia is rising to meet that challenge. Today, thanks to the support of General Becton and the willing leadership of the university presidents behind me, over the next five years, thousands of college students, AmeriCorps participants, volunteers, parents and teachers will work together to help D.C.'s children learn to read so that they can meet that national goal.

The presidents of seven D.C. area colleges and universities -- American, Catholic, Gallaudet, Georgetown, George Washington, Howard and Trinity -- have pledged nearly 700 students next year and thousands of students over the next five years to serve as reading tutors in D.C.'s public schools. And we should all thank them for it. (Applause.) And we should note, too, that there are several hundred students from these seven schools who are already working in our city as tutors and as other public servants.

These new tutors, the vast majority of whom will be work-study students, will begin in the 18 District schools General Becton has identified as most in need of this kind of partnership, including Garrison. But we hope the effort will expand to many more of D.C.'s schools. In each of the 18 schools we will place two AmeriCorps participants who will work full time to coordinate the effort and recruit more volunteers.

I might say that one of the things I have learned in visiting schools all across America, in all different kinds of settings, is that it requires an organized effort by the schools to effectively use the volunteers -- and sometimes volunteers aren't in the schools simply because the school either hasn't taken the time or doesn't have the resources to organize bringing them in and using them effectively. So that's one of the things that we hope we can accomplish with our AmeriCorps volunteers.

Finally, with the help of AmeriCorps and D.C. businesses, General Becton will open a family resource center in each school so that parents have the support and assistance they need to read to their own children, so that they can be the first and best teachers for our students.

After Hillary and I read the book to the 6-year-olds today -- out of the mouths of babes -- the children came up to see us. The first question they asked was, now, did you read to your daughter when she was a little girl? (Laughter.) Every night, I said. And the second question was, now, did your parents read to you when you were a little boy? The first two questions they asked. So we do have to make it possible for these parents to do their jobs.

That's another thing I've noticed over the years: Almost every parent, no matter how young they might be, no matter how uneducated they might be, desperately wants to do a good job. And we have to give them the resources to do it and the strength and self-confidence to do it.

Now, as I said, we're plotting out a race here for a tortoise, not a hare. This is not going to be done overnight. Children are not built in a day. But it is a very important start. To truly renew our capital city, we clearly have to start with our children. With the creation of this new D.C. Reads partnership, thousands of college students and volunteers will help our public school children learn to read. In so doing, they'll be taking more responsibility for their city that has given them an opportunity to get an education. They'll be creating more opportunity for the children who live here. They'll be building a stronger and a better-prepared community for the 21st century.

I believe they will inspire this community to pitch in and work together to lift up the children of the District of Columbia and make this Capital worthy of its great heritage and the bright future of our nation. We want to do more to improve education throughout the District. We'll offer more support to the Department of Education, to the District schools, sharing our expertise in a broad range of areas. Our Cabinet agencies will build on the many partnerships

they've established over the past years. We'll continue to adopt schools, to donate computers and educational software and supplies, to become engaged ourselves as tutors and volunteers throughout the public schools. AmeriCorps will build on the work that it has done, not just in tutoring but also in repairing crumbling schools and correcting fire code violations so schools can open on time, and recruiting even more volunteers.

But the most important work will be done by parents and teachers, by students and volunteers, by government and business working together. The spirit of common cause is how we must meet this challenge, and indeed all the challenges of the District of Columbia -- in education, in building safe streets, in economic development, in restoring the health of the city's finances, and the proper balance of responsibilities between the city and the national government. We are committed to this task.

Hillary and I are honored to be here with you today, and we thank every one of you for what you're doing to give our children the future they deserve. Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

11:47 A.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Clarksburg, West Virginia)

For Immediate Release

May 22, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE STUDENTS OF ROBERT C. BYRD HIGH SCHOOL

Theater
Robert C. Byrd High School
Clarksburg, West Virginia

2:50 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well, did you see it?

THE AUDIENCE: Yes!!!

THE PRESIDENT: On the screen and the Internet?

THE AUDIENCE: Yes!!!

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you may have had the better deal, because it's cooler in here. (Laughter.) Let me thank Danny Phares for his introduction. And I want to say I'm glad to be here with Governor Underwood; and with Secretary of Education, Dick Riley; and with Cleo Matthews, the President of the State Board of Education. And you may have heard me say that her daughter, Sylvia, who is here today, is my Deputy Chief of Staff in the White House and she graduated from high school in Hinton, West Virginia.

So I think that's a pretty good statement of West Virginia's educational quality. And I have to tell you, I did not have an auditorium this nice when I was in high school. I love this school. Congratulations on having a beautiful, beautiful school. (Applause.)

You heard the Town Hall meeting -- I'm just going to come down here and shake hands with anybody who wants to come down and say hello -- but I just want to say one thing to

all of you. We are about to enter not only a new century, but a new millennium, literally a time which happens once every thousand years. By coincidence, you are also entering a period in our history which will be very different from the past -- different in the way people work, different in the way people learn, different in the way people relate to each other. And it can be the greatest moment of human promise in all history. It may be, if we do everything as we should, that young people your age and those coming along behind you will have more opportunities to live their dreams than any group of people who ever lived.

But none of this will happen unless we continue to put top priority on education, continue to believe that all young people can learn and continue to be dedicated to the proposition that everybody should have a maximum opportunity to learn as much as possible. So when you leave this high school I hope you will keep that conviction with you for the rest of your lives and be dedicated to the proposition that not only you, but all the young people coming behind you, should have those opportunities.

Thank you. God bless you and good luck.

END

2:52 P.M. EDT

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
STATEMENT ON EDUCATION STANDARDS
THE WHITE HOUSE
January 8, 1998

Good morning. This week, an independent report showed that more than half the students in our nation's cities are failing to master the basics in reading, math, and science -- the building blocks of the skills they will need to succeed in the 21st Century. And while some schools are making progress, all too many of our city school systems are failing our children.

As a nation, we have a responsibility to all our children -- and especially those in our most vulnerable communities. That is why I fought for high national standards and national tests that help our children to reach their highest potential. Since I called for national standards, I am proud to say that 15 major city school systems have stepped forward to accept that challenge. But we must not rest until every school system in the nation

But we must make sure that every school system joins our for national standards -- and we must continue to expect and demand the very best from our teachers, from our school principals, and above all, from our students. We cannot afford to let them down when they need us the most.

Thank you.

general - _____
on legislation

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 1, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON EDUCATION LEGISLATION

The South Lawn

3:40 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, there really is nothing forme to say. I want to thank the previous speakers, each in their ownway, for what they have given and what they will give to the children ofour country. I believe that Secretary Riley is not only the longestserving, but the most intensely committed and effective Secretary ofEducation this country has ever had. (Applause.)

I thank the Vice President for the vivid picture he painted for usof what is going on in these school buildings. We have been out there. We have been in these buildings. We have seen them. I believe thelargest number of trailers or temporary classrooms, or whatever thepolitically correct term is, that I have seen at one school is a dozen-- in Florida. But they're everywhere. And there are a lot ofmagnificent old buildings in our cities that any person would be proudto go to school in if only they were fixed.

I'd like to thank Senator Daschle and Congressman Bonior and allthe members of Congress who are here whom they have represented today,for a genuine, consistent, passionate commitment to education that Ihave seen over my six years as President. It has never failed.(Applause.)

Thank you, Kathryn Scruggs, for giving your life to the educationof our children, and from the look in your face and the lilt in yourvoice, I'd say it's been a good gift both ways. Thank you so much.Thank you. (Applause.)

I want to thank all the educators who are here, Arlene Ackerman,our friends from the AFT and the NEA and the other educationassociations. And I thank the young children for coming today forreminding us what this all about, welcome. (Applause.) We're gladyou're all here from Stevens Elementary.

Let me begin where I meant to end: we can do this. We can dothis. This is not an insurmountable problem. We have the resources;what we need is the will and the consensus. We need open minds and openhearts.

Yesterday I was privileged to announce to the American people that our nation has triumphed over an enormous challenge. The red ink of the federal budget deficit has been replaced by a surplus. We have brought order to our fiscal house; now it is time to bring more learning to the schoolhouse. (Applause.)

In the end we needed a bipartisan consensus to pass a Balanced Budget Act that also had the biggest investment in the health care of our children in a generation and opened the doors of college wider than any act since the passage of the G.I. Bill. That's what we need now.

Think of the challenges we have overcome as a people in the last six years. The crime rate has gone down to a 25-year low. The welfare rolls are at a 29-year low. It's the first time in 29 years we've had a balanced budget. The unemployment rate is at a 28-year low. The homeownership rate in this country is at an all-time high.

We are capable of overcoming challenges that people used to wring their hands about just a few years ago. But we have to put the progress of our people over partisanship and politics. So we all came here -- let me join the chorus and say we came here not to ask for much from the majority in Congress, just one day -- one day for our children and their future; one day between now and the end of this congressional session to strengthen our public schools, to provide those 100,000 teachers for the smaller classes, to build or repair those 5,000 schools, to provide those after-school and summer school programs to help our students meet higher academic standards.

In recent days Congress has given us a glimmer of hope by passing a higher education bill that includes our initiatives on higher education, that will help millions of Americans receive the college education they need to compete in the global economy the Vice President so vividly described. It reduces the cost of student loans and provides for mentors for middle school students who can get a guarantee that they will be able to finance their college education if they stay out of trouble, stay in school, and keep learning.

I applaud the Congress, members of both parties who did this, including many who are here today. Congressmen Goodling and Kildee and Clay; Senator Kennedy and his Republican colleague, Senator Jeffords.

But though we have the finest system of higher education in the world and this is a good bill because it opened the doors to it even wider, we all know we have to have the finest K through 12 system of education in the world and it has to be there for all of our kids as we grow increasingly more diverse. We know that nothing else we can do will more profoundly expand the circle of opportunity, more directly enhance our economic competitiveness, more clearly bridge the divisions of our society and bind us together as one nation.

And yet no issue has suffered more from misplaced priorities and partisan pursuits than America's public schools. Eight months ago I sent Congress the education agenda that has been described today. It demands accountability from everyone. It says to students: we expect you to meet high standards of learning and discipline, but we want to give you the help you need to meet

those standards. It should be bipartisan in its appeal.

There was a time when education was completely bipartisan because no one asked you to register by party when you sign up for school, because every American, even Americans that have no children in our schools, have a direct, immediate, and profound interest in the success of our children's education.

Now, it is not too late. There is still time before the end of this session of Congress to spend that one day so we can cast that one vote to transform public education, to reduce the class sizes by adding 100,000 teachers -- goals Senator Patty Murray and Congressman Bill Clay have been fighting for; to build or modernize those 5,000 schools across those countries -- goals Congressman Charlie Rangel and Senator Carol Moseley-Braun have worked for hard for, for a long time now.

The plan also would connect all of our classrooms in these new or renovated buildings to the Internet by the year 2000 and train teachers to use the Internet properly and to train our children to do the same. Every school in this country should be as modern as the world our children will live in. One day, one vote, could make it happen.

The third thing we want to do on that one day is to help our students meet higher standards; and if they're in troubled neighborhoods or come from difficult families or have school systems that haven't been performing well, we know they could be helped immensely with summer school and after-school programs -- programs that Senator Barbara Boxer and Congresswoman Nita Lowey have been spearheading our fight for.

I have seen the benefits of these programs all across America. Last week I visited a school in Chicago where all the students came from the, I think now famous, housing project of Cabrini Green. Students in Chicago no longer advance to the next grade unless they can pass tests to demonstrate that they know what they were supposed to learn. But if they have trouble passing the tests, they are not branded failures, because the system has failed them. Instead, they are offered academically enriched summer school and after-school programs. Over 40,000 children now get three hot meals a day there. The summer school is now the sixth biggest school district in the United States. And guess what? In that school I visited in Cabrini Green, the reading scores have doubled and the math scores have tripled in three years. (Applause.) We only ask for one day for these initiatives -- and, oh, by the way, one day for a decent appropriations bill. That's the job that Congress is supposed to do every year. (Applause.) And we are depending upon the leadership of Senator Tom Harkin and Congressman David Obey to see that we get that kind of appropriations bill. The one the House has passed does not meet that test.

Let me tell you a little about it. It shortchanges our youngest children in Head Start, our new initiatives in higher education for mentoring children, and preparing quality teachers. It shortchanges these after-school care programs. It shortchanges our major education program to help children learn the basics. It shortchanges my Hispanic education action plan. It shortchanges our efforts for school reform and high standards and our commitment to hook all

those classrooms up to the Internet by 2000. It even shortchanges our efforts for safe, disciplined, drug-free schools. It shortchanges our young people in school-to-work efforts. It shortchanges workers who need retraining between jobs. It shortchanges our efforts to help disadvantaged youth get jobs. And in the House, unbelievably, it completely eliminates the summer job program for half a million young people.

That is wrong. As your President, I will not stand for it. (Applause.)

The men and women who are up here with me stand ready to work with people in the other party and they only ask them to do it for just one day -- to strengthen our public schools for an entire new century; to affirm the bedrock American value that every child, regardless of race or neighborhood or income, deserves the chance to live up to his or her God-given abilities. Just one day to put in place a plan that will not only help those children, but in so doing will make sure that America's greatest days lie ahead. I think it's worth one day, don't you?

Thank you very much, and God bless you. (Applause.)

general- _____
at afterschool
program event

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 26, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM EVENT

The Roosevelt Room

10:37 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. First, let me thank all of you who are here. Many of us have been working together now for 20 years on a lot of these issues and this is a very happy day for us.

I thank the First Lady for all she has done on this issue, for as long as I have known her. I thank the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, for their Family Conference and the light it has shed on the announcement we're here to emphasize today. Thank you, Secretary Riley, for the community learning centers and I'm very proud of what we've done there.

Thank you, Bill White -- I'll talk more about your contribution in a moment, but it is truly remarkable. And I thank Rand and Debra Bass for giving us a living, breathing example of the best of America -- parents who are working hard to do their jobs, but also determined to do their most important job very well with their children. I thank Senator Feinstein, Senator Dodd and Senator Boxer for being here.

Tomorrow, in the State of the Union address, I will spell out what we seek to do on behalf of our children to prepare them for the 21st century. But I want to talk a little bit about education today and about this announcement in that context.

Education must be our nation's highest priority. Last year in the State of the Union address I set out a 10-point plan to move us forward and urged the American people to make sure that politics stops at the schoolhouse door. Well, we made a lot of progress on that 10-point plan: a remarkable -- a remarkable -- array of initiatives to open the doors of college to every American who's willing to work for it; strong progress toward high national standards in the basics, the America Reads challenge, to teach every 8-year-old to read; continued progress in the Vice President's program to hook up all of our classrooms and libraries to the Internet by the year 2000.

This has been the most important year in a generation for education reform. Tomorrow I'll set out the next steps on our continuing road. First I will propose the first ever national effort to reduce class size in the early grades.

Hillary and I worked very hard 15 years ago now to have very strict class sizes at home in the early grades, and it was quite controversial and I think enormously beneficial when we did it. Our balanced budget will help to hire 100,000 teachers who must pass state competency tests, but who will be able to reduce class size in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades to an average of 18 nationwide.

Second, since there are more students and there will be more teachers, there must be more classrooms. So I will propose a school construction tax cut to help communities modernize and build new schools. Third, I will promote a national effort to help schools that follow the lead of the Chicago system in ending social promotion, but helping students with summer school and other programs to give them the tools they need to get ahead.

All these steps will help our children get the future they deserve. And that's why what we're announcing here is so important as well.

Every child needs someplace to go after school. With after-school programs we can not only keep our kids healthy and happy and safe, we can help to teach them to say no to drugs, alcohol and crime; yes to reading, sports and computers. My balanced budget plan includes a national initiative to spark private sector and local community efforts to provide after-school care, as the Secretary of Education said, to half a million more children.

Now, let me say, in addition to all the positive benefits, I think it's important to point out that the hours between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at night are the most vulnerable hours for young people to get in trouble, for juvenile crime. There is this sort of assumption that everybody that gets in trouble when they're young has just already been abandoned. That's not true. Most of the kids that get in trouble get in trouble after school closes and before their parents get home from work. So in the adolescent years and the later years this is profoundly important to try to give kids something to say yes to and something positive to do.

But we can't do it alone. As I said, our plan involves a public-private partnership. So it has fallen to me to announce that our distinguished guest from the Mott Foundation of Flint, Michigan, has pledged up to \$55 million to help ensure that after-school programs, supported by federal funds, are of the highest quality. That is an astonishing gift. Thank you, Bill White. Thank you.

We are determined to help Americans succeed in the workplace, to raise well-educated, healthy kids, and to help Americans succeed at the toughest job of all, that of being a parent.

And the Mott Foundation has gone a long way toward helping us. I thank them.

Now, I have to go back to work on my State of the Union speech. And I worked on it until pretty late last night. But I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I'm going to say this again. I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time -- never. These allegations are false. And I need to go back to work for the American people.

Thank you.

END

10:44 A.M. EST

general —

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Orlando, Florida)

For Immediate Release

September 9, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT HILLCREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Orlando, Florida

1:10 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. When President Waldrip was up here speaking, I had two overwhelming thoughts. One is that even though I had been made a member of the PTA, she was one incumbent president I could never defeat in an election. My second thought was I wish I could take her to Washington for about a month -- it might change the entire atmosphere up there. She was unbelievable.

Let me say how delighted I am to be here at Hillcrest. I want to thank Principal Scharr for making me feel so welcome. And, Claire Hoey, thank you for what you said about the education of our children. And thank you both for the comments you made about the First Lady and the work we have done over the years for children and for education.

I'd like to thank Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rosello, my longtime friend, for being here. It's quite fitting that you would be here at this school, which is committed to bilingualism and to a multicultural future for America. I'd like to thank three members of the United States Congress who came with me today -- Representatives Corrine Brown, Robert Wexler, and Peter Deutsch. They're all here in the front row, and thank you for coming. Thank you, Anne MacKay, for being here. And I'd like to thank the state representatives who are here -- Shirley Brown, Lars Hafner, and Orange County Chair Linda Chapin, and the Superintendent of the Schools Dennis Smith.

Let me say to all of you, I was so excited when I heard about this school because it really does embody what I think we should be doing in education, and in a larger sense, what I think we should be trying to do with our country. And I'd like to begin by just saying a few words about it.

First of all, the principal has already outlined it better than I could, along with what your teacher and your PTA president said, but this is a school that has a lot of different kids in it -- not only different ethnic groups, they have different religions, they have different cultural heritages. Their parents have different financial circumstances -- I would imagine breathtakingly different. And yet, if you look at them all together, they're all a part of our future.

And we say in our Constitution, we say in our laws that every one of them is equal not only in the eyes of God, but in the eyes of their fellow Americans. This school is trying to make that promise real for all of them. And in creating a community in which they all count and all have a chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities, they're doing what we in America ought to be doing. I also think some of the strategies are very good. I think the school uniform policy is a good one. I've tried to promote it because I think it promotes learning and discipline and order, and gives kids a sense of solidarity, and takes a lot of heat off parents without regard to their income, and sort of reinforces the major mission of the school. I think that's a good thing. I think having a school-based academic strategy is important. I think the literacy programs are profoundly important. And I'm very glad you are involved in reading recovery. So there are so many things that I think are quite good about this school, and I thank you for giving me and Lt. Governor MacKay the chance to come by here today.

I want to talk about what we're trying to do in Washington for education and to support not only this school, but the truly extraordinary effort that Governor Chiles and Lieutenant Governor MacKay have made here over the last few years to support Florida's schools. And let me begin by backing up a step.

I'm very grateful as an American to have had the chance to serve and to be a part of what our people have accomplished in the last six years -- to have the lowest unemployment rate in a generation; to have in just a few more days the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years; to have the lowest crime rate in 25 years; and the smallest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years; and the lowest inflation rate in 32 years; and the highest home ownership in American history. And we did it while downsizing the national government to its smallest size in 35 years and investing more in states and localities and schools. I'm grateful for what all of the American people have done together.

But my focus today is on what we should do with that. What should we do with that? Because normally if people have been through some very trying times and very challenging times and they reach a kind of a plateau, the easiest thing to do is to sort of say, whew, now let's just sort of sit back, relax and enjoy it. I think that would be a mistake, because the world is changing very fast. You see that, don't you, if you pick up _ and see what's happened in the stock market -- you know? We had a great big day, yesterday; we had not such a good week or so before that. And when you read and you say, well, why is all this happening? Are a bunch of companies going broke or are a bunch of new companies making a lot of money? And you read between the lines and see, no, no, it's a lot of things that are happening around the world. What does that mean?

The more we become a part of the world in America, with the diversity of our population, the more America becomes a part of the world beyond our borders in our economic and other partnerships. And the world is changing so fast that I believe what we should do with these good times is not to pat ourselves on the back, but to say, hey, thank goodness, we finally have the security and the resources to face the long-term challenges of this country. And that is what we intend to do with our good times.

That is what I have asked the American people, in this season when as citizens we think about voting to think about, what are we going to do to deal with the long-term challenges of the country. When these children get out of high school, all the baby boomers will start retiring. I know that; I'm the oldest of the baby boomers. The baby boom generation are roughly Americans between the ages of 52 and 34. And until this group of school children that came into the last two years, we were the biggest group of Americans ever. Now, if we retire without making some changes in the Social Security system and reforming the Medicare system so it takes care of seniors, but does it in a way that doesn't put unconscionable burdens on younger people -- if we don't do that, then by the time we retire, one of two things is going to happen: either the baby boomers are not going to have a very good retirement, or we're going to have it at the expense of lowering their standard of living -- because there will be, for a period of time, two people working -- only two people working for every one person retired. No one wants that.

We're in good shape now. That's why I say we shouldn't spend any of this surplus that, hopefully, we will have for several years, that we'll begin to realize on October 1st -- we shouldn't spend it all in a tax cut or a spending program until first we know we've taken care of Social Security and Medicare, because I don't know anybody in my generation that wants to undermine their future to take care of our retirement. That's a big issue.

We have to prove in this global economy with, as you know in Florida, with a lot of global warming -- you had all those fires this year, you had the hottest year in history, the hottest month you ever had in June -- you know about that. We've got to prove we can deal with environmental challenges and grow the economy. Believe it or not, there are a lot of people that _don't believe that. There are still a lot of people who think that it is impossible to have an economic growth in any advanced society unless you are deteriorating the environment. I don't believe that, I don't think the evidence supports that. We've got to prove that. We have to prove that.

We have to prove that we can give both quality and affordable health care to all our people -- the 160 million people in managed care plans. People still want to know if they get hurt they can go to an emergency room, if they need a specialist they can see it, and their medical records are going to be protected. We have to prove we can have the most cost-effective health system and still maintain quality.

So we've got these big challenges and we've got to deal with all these challenges in the global economy you've been dealing with, reading about. But let me say to you there is no more important challenge than giving every one of these children -- especially if they start out in life without all the advantages that a lot of other children have -- a chance to get a world-class education. There is no more important long-term challenge for America.

That is what will make us one America, whole, together, respecting each other's differences, when everybody's got a chance to sort of live out their dreams.

You know, we've all got this on our mind -- I don't know if you all know this, but when I

got off the plane today, the young man that caught Mark McGwire's home run last night was there waiting for me because he was flown down to Disney World today, which I thought was a real hoot with his family. And last night, late last night, I talked to Mark McGwire and his wonderful young son, who's in uniform and always out there. And I got to thinking about what's Mark McGwire going to do with the rest of his life? What's he going to do with the rest of his season?

And I'll tell you what I think he'll do. I think he'll hit more home runs and play more baseball and do more things. But that's what you've got to think about America. How would you feel if Mark McGwire announced, well, I've been working real hard to do this all my life and if it's all the same to you, I think I'll skip the last 18 games. Right? Or if it's all the same to you, I think I'll just stand up there and see how many times I could walk. You would be puzzled, at least, wouldn't you?

Well, that's the kind of decision we have to make as Americans. What are we going to do with our good economy? What are we going to do with our improving social fabric? I'd like to see our country become modeled on what you're trying to do here at Hillcrest.

And in specific terms, I want to say there are some things before the Congress today, some specific education bills that I think respond to the needs of the American people. And no matter how well you're doing, you know there are still some needs out there. I was especially impressed by what you said you were doing with new mothers and newborn children and trying to get kids off to a good start. Hillary and I had a conference on early childhood and the brain not very long ago, and I think we have all underestimated how much good can be done in those first couple of years of life. And that's very good. Let me tell you -- sort of set the scene here. The Department of Education today is releasing a report that shows that while we're making progress, students that live in high-poverty areas continue to lag behind other students in 4th grade reading and math scores. Fewer than half of all the 4th graders in the high poverty areas are scoring at basic levels of performance in math. Now, I will say again, you rebuke that whole idea that there has to be a difference in people based on the income of their parents or the nature of their neighborhood. That's what you're trying to prove does not have to be. And I believe that as well.

So let me just briefly review the agenda that these members of Congress -- these three here -- are supporting, that we're going to try to pass in what is just a very few weeks left in this legislative session. I want smaller classes in the early grades all across America. You've got that here. We have a program that would hire 100,000 teachers in the early grades. If we hired the 100,000 teachers -- it's in our balanced budget -- we could lower class size to an average of 18 in the early grades all across America. I want Congress to help me create safer schools, to continue to build partnerships with local law enforcement and schools. Just this morning, the Justice Department has released over \$16 million to 155 law enforcement agencies across the country to make sure we have community-based organizations to prevent crime in the first place.

This school -- I understand you do a lot of work and loan out some computers so families

can learn about computers. I think it's important that we hook up every classroom and every library and every school in America by the year 2000. We have a bill to do that in Congress and we want to pass that bill.

We also have responses specifically to that education report I mentioned -- a bill in Congress to create what we call Education Opportunity Zones, as well as expanding funding for Title I. It would give extra help to the classrooms, the schools, that are prepared to end social promotion, but not tag kids as failures -- that want to have after-school programs, that __ want to have summer school programs, that want to have extra help for kids who need it -- that need more resources to do the kind of intensive effort that this reading recovery program here, for example, requires.

Everybody knows it's one of the best programs in the world. Unfortunately, too many schools don't do it because it costs money to do it -- because you really have to give intensive help to these children at an early age.

So I think that's important. A part of that would be paying the college expenses of 35,000 young people who agree when they get out of college to go out and teach off their college loans by going into under-served areas and urban and rural areas in America. I think that's worth doing.

And finally, we're trying to fully fund our America Reads program, which will make sure that we give enough reading tutors and trained volunteers to enough schools to make sure every 8-year-old in this country -- every one -- can read a book independently by the time they're in the 3rd grade.

Now, this is very important stuff. And so far I can't tell you how it's going to come out in Washington. But remember, I'm not increasing the deficit, this is in the balanced budget that I presented to Congress. The money is there, so the issue is not whether the money is there; the issue is what are our priorities and what are we going to do with the money.

Now, notwithstanding what Representatives Wexler, Deutsch, and Brown want to do, the House of Representatives voted to actually cut \$2 billion off these programs. The Senate has not done so yet. They've been a little more encouraging. I don't want this to be a partisan issue; education should be an American issue. When I go to a school and walk up and down and shake hands with kids, I don't look for a political label on their uniforms. This is an American issue. But it is a big issue.

So I would just ask all of you to make it as clear as you can that you'd like for us in Washington to put the same priority on education that the parents and the teachers and the kids do at Hillcrest; that you would like for us to try to create an American community like the one that you are trying to create with your children here at this school; and that there are very specific opportunities Congress is going to have in the next three weeks where a "yes" vote or a "no" vote is required, and you'd like to see us vote yes for our children and our future.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Q+A w/ President
during educ. budget
talks

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 11, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
DURING EDUCATION BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS
The Cabinet Room

1:00 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: In only 447 days, the 21st century begins, a century in which the education of our nation's children will matter more than ever before. Yet, far too many of our schools are not ready for that new century. We've all seen the news stories about teachers teaching classes in subjects they didn't major in in college, about schools so overcrowded they have trailers out back to handle the overflow, about classrooms with 35 or more students all vying for a minute of attention from the teachers, about schools so old they can't be connected to the Internet.

This can be changed, but we cannot afford to wait. And we are waiting for the Republican majority in Congress to bring this year's education investment bill to the floor. The delay must end. On education, Congress must choose progress over partisanship. We need a strong bipartisan bill.

Just a few days ago I had the honor of signing into law such a bill to open the doors wider to higher education. And in just the last two days, Republicans and Democrats have worked together to pass strong charter school and vocational education measures. And I'd like to thank Senator Jefford, Senator Kennedy, Senator Coats, Congressmen Goodling and Clay and Roemer for that. Now it's time once again for Congress to cross party lines and send me an education budget that I can sign that is worthy of our children and their future.

This bill must make the right investments in our children's future. It must include a strong down payment on my request for 100,000 teachers for smaller classes in the early grades. It must invest in academically enriched after-school and summer school programs to keep kids in school and out of trouble. It must invest in modernized schools for our children -- we cannot raise students up in buildings that are falling down. Any budget that does not do anything to help modernize our schools, to give our children safe and clean places to learn does not fully prepare them for the 21st century.

Tomorrow night, the funding to keep the government open expires again. Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, the Democratic colleagues and I will work with the Republican majority to do the right thing for our country. We must pass a budget that is fiscally responsible, that honors our values, that invests in the education of our children. That is the most important thing we can do in this long running Congress.

Q Mr. President, the Republican leaders were saying this morning that if you were serious about reaching this budget deal that you would stay in Washington instead of going on to fundraisers tomorrow and the following day.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me first of all say that in the State of the Union in January, I sent a program to Congress to save the surplus until Social Security is fixed, to invest in education as I just described, to pass a patients' bill of rights, to keep our economy going amidst all this economic turmoil in the world. In February, I sent them a balanced budget with the same education program in it.

This is the first Congress in 24 years that did not pass a budget -- in 24 years. Now, they have turned their attention to this and we are making progress. And I worked on it yesterday, I am prepared to do whatever it takes to work with them now that they have turned their attention to this to get the job done. But in the end it is their votes. We are aggressively working with them to resolve this, but they have to decide that they will agree with us after this whole year that it is a priority, that we are going to do it and that we're going to do it now.

Q Mr. President, will you sign another continuing resolution if Congress passes one? Dick Armev said today that he felt one was needed.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean for a couple days?

Q That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, sure, we're not going to shut the government down if we're working on this, of course. No one is interested in doing that. I just want to get this job done.

CONGRESSMAN GEPHARDT: Mr. President, can I add an answer? This Congress has been here probably less than most Congresses, but what I'm worried about is not when they're not here. What I'm worried about is when they are here -- they've killed campaign reform, they've killed the tobacco bill, they've killed all the education legislation the President has sent, they killed patients' bill of rights; they tried to spend the surplus on a tax cut, rather than saving it for Social Security.

They shouldn't be worried about whether the President is here or not -- the President is here, the President sent the bills. I'm worried about what they do when they are here. They kill everything that the American people want. And that's what they've got to get to work on, to do the things people want done.

Q Mr. President, you characterize this as a do-nothing Congress. Do you think, with the results of the upcoming election will it be a referendum on your presidency? You're going to run against this Congress, do you think the election results will be a referendum on your presidency?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I'm not running. But what I do intend to do is to

bring the issues to the American people. The American people will have to decide if they believe that Social Security should be saved before this surplus is spent for other things. The American people will have to decide whether they really want a patients' bill of rights that guarantees people in HMOs the right to see a specialist or go to the nearest emergency room or have their medical records private or finish a treatment for chemotherapy or pregnancy before they can be forced to change doctors.

These are the kinds of decisions the American people have to make about what they want for their future. What I'd like to see is this election to be about the American people and their future, not about Washington, D.C. -- just as I think this last year could have been and should have been about the people in America and not about Washington, D.C. That is the decision before them and I trust them. I think they'll make the right decision.

general - to
Chicago
School

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Chicago, Illinois)

For Immediate Release

April 8, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO MEMBERS OF THE RACHEL CARSON SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Rachel Carson School
Chicago, Illinois

10:58 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you for making me feel so welcome at what is at least my third trip to the Chicago schools since I've been President. I want to begin by thanking Rita Nicky for that wonderful introduction and for her obvious devotion to the children of this city. I thank very, very much Kathleen Mayer, the principal, for making me feel welcome. I'd also like to thank Catherine Garza (phonetic), whose science class I visited. And I'd like to thank the students in the science class who showed me how to make a weather vane, and the young students who sang to me today, and all the students, indeed, of Rachel Carson, along with the teachers and the administrators and the staff. Thank you so much.

I thank Aldermen Coleman, O'Connor, and Burke for being here. I thank Congressman Gutierrez, but also Congressmen Davis, Rush, and Blagojevich, who are out here in front, for being here, for their support. Thank you. And Senator Art Berman and Senator Dick Durbin. And Senator Carol Moseley-Braun I'll have more to say about later. I want to thank the Mayor and all of those who have cooperated with him, the members and the leaders of the teachers union, the parents, the administrators, everybody, in this remarkable attempt to revolutionize, revitalize, and energize the schools of the city of Chicago. It has been awesome to watch. But in particular I would like to thank the CEO of the Chicago Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools, Paul Vallas and Gery Chico. They have done a wonderful job and I thank them so much. Thank you, gentlemen.

But, Mayor, none of it would have happened without you. And you believed that the kids of Chicago could learn and deserved a chance to learn, and could have a future and deserved the chance to have that future. And when you said -- you got up here and you said you got tired of making excuses for failure and you decided to start making reasons for success, the whole crowd clapped. I wish that every public official in America had that simple creed. We'd be a lot better off as a country, and I thank you.

I also want to thank the Carson Choir and the Recorder Band, the people that provided music earlier. Very often when I get up to speak I feel like that old joke at the banquet --

where the banquet starts at 6:00 and everybody in the whole room either gets introduced or gets to talk. And the last speaker gets up at 10:00 and he says, everything that needs to be said has been said-- but not everyone has said it. And somehow that's how I feel this morning, because so much that needs to be said has been said.

But I want to try to put this issue of modernizing our schools in a larger context for you -- about what it means to prepare our country for the 21st century. It is just 632 days away. I'm gratified that most Americans think we're in good shape for that new century, because we have the strongest economy in a generation, 15 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in a quarter century, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the highest home ownership in history; it's the first time crime has gone down this many years in a row since President Eisenhower was President. The welfare rolls are the lowest they've been in 27 years. That's all good.

But when things are changing as rapidly as they are now, we should use good times to think about the problems that remain today and the challenges that loom ahead tomorrow. It is a responsibility of good citizens in a democracy to bear down and do more in the good times, not to relax and pat ourselves on the back.

This meeting I had today, along with 23 community forums the Vice President and the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, are having across the nation, are all designed to discuss the importance first of modernizing the schools. Like Senator Durbin said, we all owe a debt of gratitude to Carol Moseley-Braun for sounding the alarm on this issue. She is the first person who ever talked to me about the possibility that the federal government should play a role. And so I said, well, look, I was a governor for 12 years and I spent more money on education than any of my predecessors. I raised more funds. I put more money into the schools. But the building decisions were always made at the district level.

And she gave me the same speech to me years ago she gave to you today. She said, but having good schools is a national priority. We spend money at the federal level on roads that are the responsibility of the state and local government. We invest in that kind of infrastructure. But the most important infrastructure for tomorrow is the infrastructure of education. If we can be spending federal money, as we are, to try to make sure we connect every classroom and library in the entire country to the Internet by the year 2000, don't we want the classroom to be fit to go to school in, and don't we want there to be enough to have small class sizes where we need it.

So she sold me, and ever since I've been try to sell the country, which as usual is ahead of the politicians, and the Congress, which sometimes is a little behind the President. So we're working on this in Washington.

And I came back to Chicago because of all the exhilarating things that Chicago is doing -- leading a revolution in public schools of high standards, accountability, rising expectations. Last year I came here to highlight the practice of ending the destructive policy of social promotion but not letting the kids drift off and instead bringing them closer by giving them summer school opportunities.

Today, the Mayor told me there are now 240 schools plus in Chicago open after school

every day for tutoring and academic work and to provide a decent dinner to poor students who need it so the kids can actually get three meals a day in 240 schools. He said there had already been an evaluation of the first 40 schools where this three-meals-a-day policy had been in effect, and the tutoring, and that 39 of them had shown dramatic gains in learning. This is not rocket science, this is taking care of our children. If Chicago can do it, everybody can do it.

The Mayor and I were talking yesterday about the ROTC program in the schools and what it does for young people, to be able to put on that uniform and feel the pride and find constructive things to do, and how they're being given a little extra consideration in being hired for other work that needs to be done in Chicago. So Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, sitting here while we're talking, she said, you know, I'm not sure we put enough money in the defense budget to take care of all the kids in the country that would like to be in ROTC. And there are a lot of kids in this country that that may be the only opportunity they ever get to learn the lessons they'll learn and become the kind of people they can become to do the kinds of things they can do. So I now have a new assignment from Senator Carol Moseley-Braun -- (laughter) -- and I am about to fulfill it when I go back to Washington.

I say this to you because this is big stuff here. This is exciting. All over the country people, all kinds of people have just sort of given up on public schools and the kids that are in them and the children whose first language is not English. And I'm telling you, that's crazy. I just got back from the poorest continent on earth -- Africa. I saw over half a million people in one sitting in Ghana. I went to rural villages. I talked to all kinds of people. I can tell you I believe more strongly than I ever have in my life that there is an even distribution of intelligence, energy, and potential among all human beings everywhere. The question is, are we doing what's necessary to bring it out and to give kids the chance that they need.

So that's what this is about. I really like the fact that in her introduction Rita said, well, even in the old building teachers work hard to do a good job. A lot of those classrooms are still open and they're appealing -- I was kidding her, I went to a high school that was built in 1914. It's been closed for years. We're trying to renovate it and open it up as an arts center. But if you really want to make the old buildings work, it requires a lot of money, too. And our proposal would permit not only the building of new buildings, but also the rehabilitation of old buildings -- I mean the rehabilitation -- opening the window, solving the problems that she mentioned, recovering them for positive purposes.

What does all this mean? At this school you've got reading and math scores up, attendance at almost 100 percent, all parents turning out for report card pick-up day. This is a school of choice, a school of champions. And congratulations, by the way, to the 5th and 6th grade soccer team for winning the city title. But you're winning an even more important title in my mind by proving that our city public schools can work.

Now, if I were listening to this and I were in the same state of mind I was in before I became a convert, I would say, well, if the city of Chicago can put all this money into building new schools, why can't everybody? I'll tell you why. Ask the Mayor. There's a limit, even in these good economic times with these very low interest rates, in how much money that the

markets will let any city borrow to build school buildings. There is also a limit to how much the taxpayers can pay, as Senator Carol Moseley-Braun said.

This is a national priority. I went to a school in Florida in a fairly modest-size community, where the kids in the school building were also going to school in 17 house trailers out back. Since last year we've got the largest number of children in our schools in the history of America. This is a problem not just in big cities, it's a problem in a lot of smaller towns and communities across this country.

One-third of all of our schools need major repairs. More than half have major building problems. Nearly half don't have the wiring systems necessary to support my goal of hooking up every classroom to the Internet. Think of that. How bizarre is that? You have all these high-tech companies wanting to give you computers, hook you up to the Internet -- I'm sorry, the wiring in the schools won't let us take our kids into the 21st century. The American Society of Civil Engineers gave our schools an F in its infrastructure report card this year -- worst than in roads, bridges, mass transit, and every other category of investment.

Last week Congress passed billions of dollars for new roads, new bridges, and other public works. I believe that we should have a good road program. I believe that unsafe bridges should be repaired. I believe that the city streets ought to be in good shape. I believe that mass transit should be adequately funded. But I believe none of that will matter very much if we let the education system come crumbling down around our children.

I want these kids to be able to get on the subway in New York or the Dan Ryan expressway in Chicago, and be able to afford the ticket or afford a car, and be going to a job where they can earn a good living because they've got a good education. You can't just have one kind of investment.

Now, the proposal in our balanced budget plan to help the schools do construction provides tax incentives to help communities modernize and build more than 5,000 schools. Our children deserve schools they can be proud of.

I want to help promote programs like after-school programs. We have funds for that. I have a program to reduce class size in the early grades all over the country and help schools hire teachers to do that. But if we pass the funds to provide help for the schools to stay open late, to tutor the kids, to feed the kids, do whatever needs to be done, and if we provide funds for more teachers to help get the class size down, you still have to have good classes in good buildings that are safe and clean, where there are good learning environments, and they are at least adequately organized so they can be part of the Information Superhighway. This is an important thing.

The work that is being done by your school leaders here, we can't do. Eighty percent of the schools in Chicago now, according to the Mayor, are following the school uniform policy, which you know I love. I thought those kids looked great in their uniforms today. And I know -- and the children that can't afford it, you have to find help to give them that. If you're going to have uniform policy, it's got to embrace all children.

But that's a decision that a local district has to make. The President can tell you how to do it legally and help support it morally, but that's a decision you have to make. You know, which schools should be open how many hours a day, what kind of tutoring programs you have, what you do with the ROTC program -- that's a decision you've got to make here. How these children learn to speak English, if English is not their first language -- I want to thank one of the students, Rosalia Delgado, who took me around this morning -- how she learned to speak English -- that's a decision you have to make. But it is in the national interest to know that we have decent infrastructure for our schools, just as much as our national future depends upon a decent network of highways and a decent investment in mass transit. That is the idea that we have to convince the Congress on.

And when I can show people that, look what they're doing in Chicago, all they want us to do is to help, to create a framework in which they can have more success, and a framework in which every other school in America can have the kind of success I saw here at Rachel Carson, I think we will have gone a long way.

So I came here to send that message out and I ask you to help me send that message out and give your members of Congress and the United States Senate a pat on the back for leading the way.

Thank you and God bless you.

END

11:15 A.M. CDT

general - to
Chicago

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Chicago, Illinois)

For Immediate Release

September 25, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND TUTORS
Jenner Elementary School
Chicago, Illinois

12:05 P.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. There aren't all that many 6th graders that could do that and be less nervous than she was. She did a great job, didn't she? Thank you, Gina, thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am so glad to be here today. I thank the Mayor for his extraordinary work. And I want to thank Secretary Daley, too, for being a truly remarkable Secretary of Commerce. My old friend, John Stroger, thank you for being here. I'd like to thank the Board members of the Chicago School Reform Board -- Gery Chico and the other members who are here. I thank Paul Vallas, your CEO. I thank your principal -- thank you for your good work here. It's been my experience that all good schools have a good principal.

I want to thank Gina again. I'm sure the first time she was asked to do this, this was just one step above going to the dentist, you know. And I thought she did a superb job.

I'd like to thank Joanne Alter, and all the people who are involved in the WITS program here in Chicago. I believe in this so strongly. Last year we arranged to have students from a thousand colleges and universities go into our elementary schools to help to tutor, to try to follow the sterling example you have set here.

To all the parents, the teachers, the educators, the tutors, the students, thank you. I'd also like to thank Mary Lou Kearns for being here, for her work in health care and for presenting herself as a candidate for lieutenant governor. And I'd like to thank Glenn Poshard who wanted to be here, but I wouldn't have him anywhere else -- he's back in Washington voting a tough vote so close to an election, voting not to give an election year tax cut before we make sure we've got the budget _balanced and we save Social Security for the 21st century. It is the right thing to do, and I thank him for that.

And we're glad to have Glenn's wife, Jill Poshard, here with us. Thank you, Jill, for coming. We're glad to see you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I told the Mayor on the way in that he ought to put me on the payroll because I've become such a shameless advocate for the Chicago public schools. But I

want to tell you why. First of all, I am deeply gratified by the success of our country. Most of the credit belongs to the American people. But I think our policies have had something to do with the fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, almost 17 million new jobs; the lowest crime rate in 25 years; the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years; the lowest African American poverty rate since statistics have been collected; the lowest inflation in 32 years; the highest real wage growth in more than 20 years; the highest home ownership in history; and in just six days, the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 long years.

I have been particularly grateful to the people of Illinois and the City of Chicago, without whom it is doubtful that I could have become President. I brought some of them with me here today -- Secretary Daley and Rahm Emanuel. I was met at the airport by Kevin O'Keefe, who worked in the White House for several years. And I see my good friend, Avis Lavelle out there, who was a part of our administration. And, of course, the most important person from Chicago to this administration is the First Lady, who asked me to tell all of you hello. She's out on the West Coast today and I'm going to meet her tonight so we can see our daughter tomorrow. But you've had a lot to do with it.

But I would like to especially thank Senator Carol Moseley-Braun and Congressman Glenn Poshard and the other members of the Democratic delegation in Illinois, without whom -- without any one of whom we would not have passed the economic plan in 1993, which led to this big decline in the deficit, big decline in interest rates, big takeoff in the economy.

One of the things that very few people know about that economic plan was that it also doubled something called the Earned Income Tax Credit, the EITC, which lowers taxes to working people on modest incomes with children. Today, for a family of four with an income of under \$30,000, that amounts to about \$1,000 a year going back to families. Last year alone, thanks to Glenn Poshard and Carol Moseley-Braun and these other folks -- and remember, if one of them had fallen off, none of it would have passed -- last year alone 4 million working Americans, including 1.1 million African Americans, were lifted out of poverty because of this tax cut. And that has made a major contribution to broadening economic growth. And the people of Illinois should be very grateful to them for making that historic vote in 1993 when it was hard to do. And I thank them.

Now, the Mayor once said when he was talking that not so many years ago people were kind of defeatist about the American economy. There is still a great debate going on in Washington, D.C. about public education. Everybody knows -- everybody knows that we have the finest system of higher education in the world, and we have now open the doors of college to everybody who is willing to work for it with the HOPE Scholarship, the \$1,500 tax credit for the first two years of college; with tax credits for all higher education; the deductibility of student loans; huge increase in Pell Grants; 300,000 more work-study positions. We've done that. But all of us know that we can't stop until we can look each other straight in the eye and say with absolute conviction, every child in this country, without regard to their race, their income, their neighborhood, their family circumstances -- every single child has access to a world-class education. That is our national mission and we cannot stop until we achieve it.

Now, back to what I was saying before -- there really is an honest debate in Washington. Some people who haven't been to places like Jenner School have given up on the public schools. Chicago didn't give up. Chicago said, if we give the schools back to the parents, if we hold the students and teachers accountable, and if we help those who need help, we can make our schools work again.

As I was saying before, I go all over the country and people's mouths drop open when I say, they've ended social promotion in Chicago, but everybody gets to go to summer school; they have after-school programs. People's eyes pop out when I say, Chicago's summer school is the sixth biggest school district in America; when I say over 40,000 kids are getting three square meals a day here. I say to you, if we can do this here, we can do it anywhere.

If these students -- and look at them, their bright eyes and their whole life before them -- but you know as well as I do -- when I was in this little class beforehand -- I want to thank the two young men who were in the tutoring class with me, and the tutor who sat around the table and all the other young people that were in there -- and by the way, one of the little lessons today was on Washington, D.C. and one of the test questions was, how many words can you make from the letters in Washington? One of the students got more words than I did. I liked that.

But one of the questions in the little form they had today was, if you were President what would you do? And one of the students said, well, if I were President, I'd do something to end the violence. Another said, if I were President, I wouldn't sell guns to anybody but police officers. Another said, if I were President, I would have more homes for the homeless and more clothes for them.

So I want these children to know -- I know a lot of you have got it pretty tough. I know that life's not so easy for you when you're out of school. I know that you've seen a lot of things in your life already that children should never see. But I want you to know something else. If you make the most of your education you can still live out your dreams. You can do what you want to do with your lives. You can be happy. You can be fulfilled. You can succeed. And that's what we owe you -- an education that gives you a chance to be fully free to live out your own dreams. And we are determined to do it.

Now, if the principal, the students, the parents, the volunteers, and the students here can double reading scores and triple math scores -- and according to what I saw, last year alone, reading scores in percentile terms increased by 50 percent -- if you can do that, if you can do it here, than no one else in America has an excuse. They can do it, too. But if you can do it here, then the decision-makers in Springfield and in Washington, D.C. don't have an excuse either. We owe it to you to give you the tools and the support you need so that every child can be a part of a successful school. We don't have an excuse either.

Jenner proves, Chicago proves that the public schools can work. Now the rest of us have to go to work and give you the tools you need to succeed. I have given Congress a plan that would make a big dent in that. And I have worked as hard as I could now for six years to make education a bipartisan issue. America cannot be strong unless we give all of our children a

world-class education. This should not be a partisan issue. But the fact is that the majority of the Congress is in the hands of _the other party. And earlier this year I gave them an education plan that for both partisan and ideological reasons they refused to act on, and we know it could dramatically improve our schools.

Let me tell you what it does. It says, first of all, everybody's got to take responsibility for high standards and learning. But, secondly, if there are going to be high standards, we have to give students the opportunity to reach those standards. That's the formula that's worked here and it's the formula that will work throughout the country.

So I said, let's develop voluntary national standards; let's give exams to our kids to see if they're meeting it; but let's don't designate children failures before they ever have a chance. Give these kind of summer school and after-school opportunities to all the children of the United States and you'll see what they'll do with them.

I say we ought to have smaller classes in the early grades and gave a budget plan to the Congress that would lower _class size to an average of 18 in the first three grades, and hire another 100,000 teachers. I said we ought to do even more for the really poor areas of America, and I gave Congress a plan to educate 35,000 bright young people and then let them pay off all their student loans by going into our hardest pressed areas and teaching for a few years. These are good ideas, they'll make America stronger.

I embrace Senator Carol Moseley-Braun's idea that we ought to have more places doing what Chicago's doing and building new schools and repairing old ones. So I gave the Congress a bill that says, let's tear down and rebuild or repair or build 5,000 schools. And here's a plan to do it, paid for in the Balanced Budget Act.

All of these things are in this education bill. I gave them a plan for safer schools through more partnerships with local law enforcement. I gave them a plan to hook up every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000 so that every child can have access to the world of learning now on the Internet, and every child can have access to the wonders of computer technology. So far, Congress has not responded.

I gave them a plan for more charter schools, for better rewards for our more committed teachers, to do more to train teachers, to make sure we have certified Master teachers in all the schools of America. Without touching a dime of the surplus, we did all that. So far, Congress has not responded.

So I say to you here in Chicago, you are doing your part, and it's time Washington, D.C. did its part to help you succeed. That is our commitment to you.

There are a few days left in the congressional session -- it's not too late. It's not too late for Congress to put aside the lure of election year and save Social Security before we spend the surplus; not too late to give all the patients in this country the protection of a patient's bill of rights; not too late to keep our economy growing by protecting us against the troubles in the

global economy and doing what we can to turn it back; not too late to reaffirm our commitment to a clean environment; and, most important, not too late -- not too late -- to pass this education agenda so that every child has a chance to be a part of the miracle of his or her own learning. That will be the surest way to America's greatest years in the 21st century.

Good luck, young people. Make the most of it. Thank you and God bless you.

END 12:12 P.M. CDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 29, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONGRESS

Washington Hilton
Washington, D.C.

11:31 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. First of all, let me thank my longtime friend, Mary Hatwood Futrell, for that wonderful introduction, and thank you for your warm welcome. I thank the leaders of our education organizations, Bob Chase and Sandy Feldman, for their work, and welcome all of the members of EI here to the United States. I am delighted to join in your Second Congress on your final day in Washington. I hope you've had a successful meeting; even more, I hope you will be going home with new energy for your lifetime commitment to your children and the future of your nations.

It is always an honor for me to meet with educators. As President, I have had the privilege of visiting schools around our nation and around the world. And wherever I have been, whether in a small village in Uganda or a poor neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro, a town in California or an inner-city school in Chicago or Philadelphia, I always meet teachers whose dedication to their students is nothing short of heroic -- men and women for whom kindling the spark of possibility in every child, from that once-in-a-lifetime mathematics prodigy to a young girl who dreams of being the very first in her family just to finish school and go on to college.

For those people, teaching is not a job, but a mission. I know that, for you, it is such a mission. So let me thank you and your 23 million colleagues across the world for making the education of our world's children your life's work.

We are living in an era of unprecedented hope and possibility, but profound challenge. A technological revolution is sweeping across the globe. It is changing the way we live and work and relate to each other. It is binding our economies closer together, whether we like it or not. It is making our world smaller. Today, 100 million people are logging onto the Internet. In just three years, that number will be about 700 million.

With all these changes come new challenges. We know that new democracies must be very carefully tended if they are to take root and thrive. We know that with technology

advancing at rapid speed, the best jobs and the best opportunities will be available only to those with the knowledge to take advantage of them. We know that if we do not take action, dangerous opportunity gaps between those people and those nations who have these skills and those who do not have them will grow and deepen.

The best way, therefore, to strengthen democracy, to strengthen our nation, to make the most of the possibilities, and to do the best job of meeting the challenges of the 21st century is to guarantee universal, excellent education for every child on our planet. _

Where once we focused our development efforts on the construction of factories and power plants, today we must invest more in the power of the human mind, in the potential of every single one of our children. A world-class education for all children is essential to combatting the fear, the ignorance, the prejudice that undermine freedom all across the globe today in the form of ethnic, religious and racial hatreds. It is essential to creating a worldwide middle class. It is essential to global prosperity. It is essential to fulfilling the most basic needs of the human body and the human spirit. That is why the 21st century must be the century of education and the century of the teacher.

As Mary said, throughout my career first as the governor of one of our states and now as President, I have worked to make education my top priority. Today I want to share with you what we are doing to provide every American at every stage in life a world- class education. And I want to recommit the United States to working with other nations to advance education as our common cause.

We are working very hard with nations all across the world through our AID programs - our Agency for International Development -- and in other ways. At the recent Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile, we reaffirmed the commitment of the Americas to work in common on the training of teachers and the development and dissemination of not only technology, but educational software, so that we could learn more everywhere we live, so that children in small villages in South America could have access to things which today are only dreams.

When I was in Africa I reaffirmed the focus of many of our aid programs to be on education. We announced in South Africa a project with our Discovery Channel to try to bring technology and the benefits of it to small African villages. We are working in Bosnia and Croatia to help the students there learn about democracy so that they can preserve what so many have given so much to create -- a real sustainable peace in a multi-ethnic democracy.

All across the world America has an interest in seeing education improve. One-third of the adults in the world are illiterate today, two-thirds of them live in the poorest countries. We are doing better. The literacy rate was only 43 percent in 1970. The percentage of our children going to school in 1970 across the world was only 48 percent. Today, it's 77 percent, at least in the primary school years.

And something that's very important to my wife and to me, in 1970, only 38 percent of all school children were girls. Today the percentage is 68 percent -- all girls in school. But think about it, that means 32 percent of the girls who should be in school are not. And I still visit countries where basic primary education for girls is still a dream in some places. That must not be. If we want to see these societies elevated, if we want to see the economies grow, if we want to see families made whole and able to plan their futures, we must educate all our children, the boys and the girls alike.

Here in America, we have recognized the increasing importance of a college education to our position in the global economy. In our last census, it became clear that young people who had less than two years of post-high school education were likely to get jobs where their incomes never grew, and were far more likely to become unemployed.

And so we have done everything we can to open the doors of college to all Americans who will work for it. We have made the first two years of college virtually free, with a tax credit we call the Hope Scholarship. Through expanded, low-cost student loans and _more student work positions, through tax credit and deductions for all college post-graduate and continuing education work by older workers, through giving our young people the opportunity to earn scholarship money by doing community service, we are making all forms of higher education more affordable to all kinds of Americans.

Second, we are working to establish high national standards to ensure that our children, from the earliest years, master the basics. Many of your countries already have national standards. Because in America we have a history of education being the responsibility of state governments and being within the span of control of local school boards, we don't have such national standards.

I believe in a global economy. Every nation should have national standards that meet international norms. I believe that so many students from around the world did better than their American counterparts in the Third International Math and Science Study because their country had set high standards, challenged their students to master rigorous and advanced materials, and used national tests to make sure that they did. I want to do the same in America, beginning with high standards in 4th grade reading and 8th grade mathematics, to give teachers and parents the tools they need to secure our children's future.

Third, we know that good teachers are the key to good school. We are working to reward the most innovative and successful teachers in our classrooms; to help those who fail to perform to move on or improve; and to recruit more of our best and brightest to enter the teaching profession, especially in areas where there are a lot of poor children in desperate need of more help.

Fourth, we are working to create better learning environments by modernizing our schools and reducing class size, especially in the early grades, where research has shown it

makes a positive and permanent difference in learning in our country.

Fifth, we are working hard to prepare our children for the demands of the Information Age by connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000 and by training teachers in these new technologies.

Sixth, we are working to deal with one of America's most painful problems: the presence of violence in our schools. We have a zero-tolerance policy for guns in our schools. Later this year, we will be having our first ever conference -- White House Conference in Washington on school safety. I hope and pray this is not a problem in any of the countries here represented, but if it is, we would be glad to have your ideas and to share ours with you. Teaching cannot succeed and learning cannot occur unless classrooms are safe, disciplined and drug-free. And we are working on it and we welcome your support and help.

Next, we are working to end one of the most harmful practices of a public school system that is too often overwhelmed by the challenges it faces and the lack of resources to meet them -- the so-called practice of social promotion, where children are passed from grade to grade, even when they don't learn the material first. But we believe that along with ending the practice we must follow the examples set in our city of Chicago, where there is extra help for the children after school and in the summer, so that we don't just identify children as failures, but instead say, we're going to give you more help until you succeed. I think that is profoundly important.

Finally, we are working to establish mentoring programs for children in our poorest and most under-served areas, along with guarantees of access to college that they get in their middle school years if they continue to learn and perform, so that when these children are 11 or 12 or 13 they can be told, if you stay in school and learn and you want to go on to a college or university, we can tell you right now you will have the help you need to do it. I think it is a powerful incentive, and in areas where children have been so used to being ignored for so long and feel that they will always be trapped in poverty, I think it is profoundly important.

Today, there is a vigorous debate going on in our Congress over the nature and extent of our responsibilities as a nation to our children's education. There are some in the other party who don't see eye to eye with me on what we should be doing for our public schools. Even as we recognize the importance of raising academics, challenges, standards and challenging our students to meet them, there are those who would actually prohibit the development of national tests for our schools, even if it's voluntary to participate.

Even as more studies confirm what we have already suspected about the importance of early child development, some would deny Head Start opportunities to as many as 25,000 of our disadvantaged children. Even as the greatest number of children since the baby boom are enrolling in our schools, some would weaken our efforts to recruit new, highly qualified teachers. Even as hundreds of thousands of high-paying, high-tech jobs all across America go begging for workers, some would cut our investments in education technology and technology training for

teachers. Even as the evidence is overwhelming that smaller classes -- especially in areas where children have difficulties learning, can make a permanent, positive difference in what children learn and what they continue to learn throughout their lifetime in the early grades, there are those who say we have no business investing national tax dollars in such endeavors.

Believe it or not, there are even some who are trying to kill one of our most successful efforts to provide on-the-job training to our young people and to give them something positive to do and ensure that they stay out of trouble in their free time. For a generation in our country, legislators from both our major political parties have supported the Summer Jobs program that has helped millions of our most disadvantaged young people appreciate the responsibility of a regular job and the reward of a regular paycheck.

Eliminating summer jobs would mock the very values we Americans cherish most: hard work, responsibility, opportunity. If we truly believe in these things then we should help to expose all our young people, especially those who need it, to the world of work. If we insist upon responsibility from all our people, then those of us in power must take responsibility for giving our teenagers the jobs that will help them succeed in the future and keep them on a good path today.

If we believe in opportunity for all, then we must not deny our young people this vital springboard to opportunity. I say this to point out to all of you that if you don't get your way on education every day in your own countries, don't be surprised if we don't get to do everything we want to do, either. What seems so self-evident to you and me is still not entirely clear to all decision makers. But I want to encourage you to keep up the fight.

In all my visits at home and abroad, I have found out that you can learn a lot about a country's future by visiting its public schools. Does every child -- boy and girl, rich and poor -- have the same opportunity to learn? Are they engaged by patient, well-trained and inspiring teachers? Do they have access to the materials they need to learn? Are they learning what they need to know to succeed in the country they will live in and in the future that they will create? Do they have opportunities to go on to university if they do well and deserve the chance to do so? Are the schools themselves safe, positive, good places to learn?

We have to build a future together where the answer to all these questions is "yes" in every community, in every nation. I believe we can build a future where every child in every corner of the world, because of the explosion of technology and because of the dedication of teachers, will have the skills, the opportunity, the education to fulfill his or her God-given potential.

I know this will happen if teachers lead the way. I know that there will be political fights to be fought and won. I know one of your honorees at this conference is being honored for taking huge numbers of children out of bondage and putting them back in school. Some people still view children as little more than a material asset. They are us as children, and they are our

future and the future of the world.

When he came to the White House to be honored as our National Teacher of the Year, Philip Bigler said, "To be a teacher is to be forever an optimist." I ask you not only to be vigorous in the classroom, but vigorous as citizens. You must not stop until every political leader with any political influence, in any political party, in any nation knows that this is something that has to be lifted above political partisanship. This is something that ought to be beyond all debate.

If you understand how the world is going to work tomorrow and you have any concern about the integrity and the richness of the human spirit in every child, then all of us must join hands to help you succeed in giving all those children the tomorrows they deserve.

Thank you, and God bless you.

END

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts)

For Immediate Release

August 27, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT SAFE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES EVENT

Mechanics Hall
Worcester, Massachusetts

12:00 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, first let me thank you for your remarkable and warm welcome. I'm glad to be here in Worcester, the heartbeat of Massachusetts for 150 years now. (Applause.) And in this grand hall where so many great Americans have spoken, from Frederick Douglas to Susan B. Anthony to Henry David Thoreau. I'm honored to share this stage with Kathleen Bisson, and I thank her for her commitment to teaching our children and for keeping them safe; and with Officer Michael Jones, who moved us all with how he responded to his personal tragedy.

Mr. Mayor, I thought you gave a great talk. When he was up here kind of moving around, doing his shtick, I said I was amazed. Kathleen said, you know, he ought to be in Hollywood, you should see the rap act he does for the school kids. (Laughter.) So I thank you.

Chief Gardella, I cannot thank you enough for what you said and I appreciate more than you will ever know the impact that we have had the opportunity to have through the community policing and the other law enforcement programs.

I thank Scott Harshbarger, who has been a friend of mine for a long time, and who has, I can tell you from my personal experience not only as President, but even before when I was governor, always been on the forefront of law enforcement reforms that would give our children a safer future.

I thank Congressman McGovern who has worked in both the areas we celebrate today, and in so many other ways. It's interesting to see a man who both knows what he's doing down

to the tiniest detail about how Congress works and how the committees work and how the procedures work -- and I think Congressman Moakley's tutelage had something to do with that before he showed up. But it's interesting to see someone who has that feel for the mechanics and also is plainly so connected at an emotional, human level to the people in his district and so passionately cares about it, and was able to convey that to all of us today through the wonderful metaphor of his wife and young child. And if you want to cry, go right ahead.

Let me also thank Congressman Markey, who is here, and Congressman Neal for coming out to the airport to meet me. I thank Senator Kerry, who has long been one of the leaders in law enforcement issues in the Congress, for his involvement in both these issues. And I thank Senator Kennedy for making sure that even though this is the end of a long program, none of us could possibly go to sleep. (Laughter and applause.) I always marvel at his continuing energy and commitment and dedication. And some days when I get tired and weary, I think, he's been doing this longer than I have and he never gets tired or weary, and that's a good thing.

Let me say, I have a few brief things to add to what has been said about the two issues we came here to discuss today. But because this is my only opportunity to speak with you and, through you, to the American people, I want to say a couple of things about Hurricane Bonnie and the havoc it's wreaked in North Carolina in the last day, and the flooding caused in Texas by Tropical Storm Charlie.

I know that all of our hearts go out to the families affected by these storms. Yesterday I declared a disaster in Texas because of the flooding, and today there's a disaster declaration that has just been issued for North Carolina. That makes federal funds available immediately to people who have been harmed in both places.

Thankfully, the winds are dying down in North Carolina. Hopefully, the floods soon will recede in Texas. In both cases, FEMA, our Federal Emergency Management Agency, is working with state and local agencies to assess the damage and to stay there for as long as it takes to help the people rebuild.

While we're here today, Vice President and Mrs. Gore and Secretary of Education Dick Riley are in California talking about the same things -- our common commitment to make our streets and our schools safe for families and children.

This is, as Senator Kennedy noted, a time of great prosperity for our people. We have the lowest unemployment in 28 years, the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years, about to realize the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years and we learned not very long ago that home ownership is at its highest rate in American history. And this has occurred at a time when we have reduced the government to the smallest size it has had since John Kennedy was the President of the United States.

I come here, as I have gone across this country, to say to my fellow Americans, this is

not a time to celebrate, but to be grateful. It is not a time to rest on our laurels, but to use the confidence, the resources, and the understanding we have acquired for the last six years to face the long-term challenges of this country. For the world is changing very quickly, full of new challenges.

Senator Kennedy mentioned one of them, the problem of terrorism, which has become a bigger problem for us as we become more open, and as information and money and technology can move around the world so quickly; as people themselves can move across borders so quickly. These multinational problems like terrorism, or even the global spread of disease, or shared environmental problems, are things that visionaries must think about and take steps now to prepare for.

The world will never be free of problems. And we know that the world is changing fast, which means that if we wish to maintain our present level of success, we must keep up. We cannot afford to relax. We must become more rigorous. And we must -- I say again -- use the newfound confidence of America to think more boldly, not less boldly; and to act more boldly, not less boldly, for our children's future.

There is critical business ahead of us, business that we will take up as soon as Congress comes back to work. One of the members who spoke before me mentioned it, but we want to make sure -- I think Congressman McGovern did -- we want to make sure that we have saved the Social Security system for the 21st century before a penny of that surplus is touched. We think it is important.

We want to help the teachers like Kate Bisson, not only with school violence, but with the tools necessary to move our children forward. I have an education agenda before the Congress that would provide funds in the balanced budget for school construction, to help repair and rebuild and build new buildings so that children aren't in substandard conditions. We have children going to school in some cities in America today in buildings that are 65, 70, 80 years old, where the windows are broken, where they go in -- where whole floors are closed down. What kind of signal does that send to children about their importance?

In other parts of our country we have children going to school in house trailers because the school districts are growing so fast and there's no way the people can afford to keep up with it. I was in a small school district in Florida recently where there were 17 trailers outside the main school building. This is important.

We have a program to help out school districts hire 100,000 teachers in the early grades so we can get down to an average class size of 18. It is the single most significant thing that the research shows over more than a decade now that will guarantee that children will get off to a good start in school.

We're trying to hook up all our classrooms to the Internet. We're trying to support the

establishment of voluntary national standards. We are trying, in short, to make sure we can say to our children, no matter where you grow up or what your racial or ethnic or income background is, you have access to the finest system of elementary and secondary education in the world. That's a big part of our agenda.

We have a huge health care agenda, and it begins with the patients bill of rights. With 160 million people in managed care operations, people ought to have a right, whatever their health care plan, to see a specialist if their doctor recommends it; to have emergency room care where it's needed if they have an accident; to have their medical records kept private; to be able to appeal adverse decisions. These things are important.

And so I say to you, we need your help. There's going to be a big debate on campaign finance reform when we get back in the Shays-Meehan bill that is cosponsored by Congressman Meehan from Massachusetts that's going to be in a version before the United States Senate. And our people are going to work hard to pass it. There will be major environmental debates when we get back. And these things are important.

So I say to you, the energy that brought you here today, the concern you have for these issues, you need to bring it back to every single major challenge this country faces. If I had told you six years ago that in six years we would have 16 million new jobs and all these other things, you would have said, there's another politician running for office. It happened not by accident, but because of the hard work and the vision and the citizen spirit of the American people, and the disciplined efforts that we have all made. And we must not forget that now that times are good.

We also can't forget that unless we make our communities, our schools and our children safe, prosperity doesn't mean very much. That is why this is at the core of what we have tried to do.

I told this story many times, but I want you to let me share it one more time. Right before the New Hampshire primary in 1992, a period when I was dropping like a rock in the polls -- I have some experience with that -- I was going through a kitchen in New York City. And I was walking to one of these banquets, one of these fundraising banquets. I didn't have any idea whether it would be three people or 300 or 700 when I got out the door. I was just walking through the kitchen to get there.

— And a waiter came up to me, in this nice hotel in New York. And I wasn't very well-known then -- I was the governor of Arkansas, I just started running in New Hampshire. And this man came up to me and stopped me, and he said, Mr. Governor, I want to talk to you. He said, my 10-year-old boy here in New York -- he said, he studies these elections and he reads up on the candidates, and he says I should vote for you. He said, now, if I vote for you, I want you to do something for me.

I said, well, what is it? I couldn't imagine what this man who was a waiter in a hotel in

New York wanted me to do for him. He said, well, the place where we came from in the old country, we were much poorer, but at least we were free. He said, here I make more money, but we're not free. When my boy goes across our apartment house, across the street to play in the city park, I have to go with him because I'm afraid for his safety. Our school is only a couple of blocks from our apartment, but I have to walk him because I'm afraid for his safety. So if I do what my boy wants and I vote for you, will you make my boy free? I will never forget that as long as I live.

The comprehensive approach we followed on crime is basically what, as Senator Kerry said and he certainly supported very strongly, is just what the local law enforcement people and the local community leaders taught us to do -- be smart about prevention, be smart about giving kids something to say yes to, be smart about law enforcement patterns, be smart about punishment. Crime rates are now at a 25-year low, juvenile crime is finally coming down. People do think, I think, that they are more free.

We have worked hard especially in the schools with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program. We've supported communities in schools that offer anti-truancy, curfew, school uniforms and dress code policies. We have strictly enforced zero tolerance for guns. Last year alone, over 6,000 students with guns were disarmed and sent home. This year, recently, a new report showed that the overwhelming majority of our schools are, in fact, safe. But it's not enough, as we know from the recent rash of killings in our schools all over the country.

When children in inner-city schools have to walk through metal detectors, when high schools in small towns like Jonesboro, Arkansas in my home state or Springfield, Oregon are torn apart by disturbed children with deadly weapons, when gang violence still ravages communities large and small, we have to do more.

This fall, we are going to hold the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety, and today we're taking two steps that I think will make our schools safer and our communities stronger. First, offering a guide to help prevent school violence before it starts and, second, expanding the remarkable Police Corps program to Massachusetts and elsewhere.

Let me show you what this early warning guide is all about. Earlier this year, in the aftermath of the tragedy of Springfield, Oregon, I actually went there to Springfield and I spent an extended period of time in the school library, going from table to table to table, meeting with the families of the victims; children who had been killed and a much larger number of children who had been wounded.

I talked to the school official. I asked them what they knew about the young man who was apparently involved in this incident. I asked them how they dealt with kids who were in trouble; how did they know when children were in trouble. And we began to ask other people, and we concluded that not everybody knew everything they needed to know in clear, practical terms about how to spot the danger signals early and then what to do about them.

So I asked Secretary Riley and Attorney General Reno to develop the safe school guides for educators, for parents, for fellow students, to help them recognize and then respond to early warning signs. This is the guide. It says, "Early Warning Timely Response: A Guide To Safe Schools." Now, over the next few weeks, every single school in America will get a copy of this in time for the start of the new school year. It will help schools to recognize a troubled or potentially violent young person. It outlines steps to intervene early before it's too late.

As Secretary Riley and General Reno say in their introduction, the guide should never be used to stigmatize or label young people in distress; instead, it should be used as a vital part of overall school violence prevention efforts that have to include, as others have said before and as your Mayor said about Worcester, every teacher, every parent and every young person.

This guide can make a difference in the lives of our children. The Police Corps can also make a difference. It embodies the same commitment to every person and the commitment to public service that was embodied in the life service of John and Robert Kennedy.

I first heard about the Police Corps from Adam Wolinsky, who has previously been eulogized by Senators Kerry and Kennedy, when I was the Governor of Arkansas. I was so impressed by this program and by Adam's commitment to it, that I became a charter member of the National Committee for the Police Corps on the spot. Adam and his wife, Jane, are here and I know they've already been introduced, but I want you to know that we would not be here talking to this today were it not for this one American citizen, and he is harboring a dream for years and years and years until it became real in the lives of people, and I thank him for it.

When I was Governor, I signed a bill to create a Police Corps scholarship program in our home state. And when I became President, thanks to the efforts of Senator Kennedy, Senator Kerry and others, especially of Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland and Adam, we put the Police Corps in the 1994 Crime Bill.

We've already heard that much in the way that ROTC functions, this remarkable program gives talented young people college scholarships in return for their commitment to serve as police officers in their communities. I should mention, as was pointed out to me here today before I came here, that a preference is given to one group only -- the children of police officers killed in the line of duty. And I understand that the state police here has already identified several young people who are the children of police officers who have died in the line of service in Massachusetts who, themselves, want to go into law enforcement and would be eligible to get these scholarships.

In 17 states around the country, that's what the Police Corps is already doing; creating a new generation of police officers trained to stand on the front lines and listen on the front porches, to work in distressed communities and be role models for young people.

Now, the young members of the Police Corps who are here with us today -- and I think there are some, aren't there? Are there any Police Corps members here today? What? Stand up. Thank you. We have invested in their honor, their courage, their commitment to community and country. We need more like them. That is why the announcement we make today expanding the Police Corps to six more states, including Massachusetts, awarding scholarships to more than 300 dedicated young people, is a good thing for the United States.

This Police Corps is an incredible example of what we can do when we put progress ahead of partisanship, people ahead of politics, the future of our children ahead of all else. As the Mayor said, in referring to the First Lady, it does take a village. But both of us note, as we travel around the country -- and Hillary mentioned to me just about a week ago when she came back from another stop -- it is astonishing -- it is astonishing how many places we go will there be somebody in the receiving line who will thank us for the community police officers in their community, large and small.

Robert Kennedy once said, "The fight against crime is, in the last analysis, a fight to preserve that quality of community which is at the root of our greatness, a fight to preserve confidence in ourselves and in our fellow citizens, a battle for the quality of our lives." With these actions, we move a step closer to winning that battle for all our people, and to building that bridge toward a strong America in the 21st century. Thank you and God bless you all.

END

12:26 P.M. EDT