

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 24, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

The Grand Hyatt Hotel
Washington, D.C.

2:14 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary, that was a good speech --(laughter) -- and fully illustrated Clinton's third law of politics, which is, whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high position. (Laughter.) Their objectivity is stunning. (Laughter.)

I thank Secretary Riley and all the people at the Department of Education for the work that they do. Stan Ikenberry, I'm glad to be here today, with all of you. President Knapp, thank you for your moving remarks about the HOPE Scholarship. You all laughed when Barry said he was making a great sacrifice by going to the Aspen Institute, but in Georgia, that's what they think. (Laughter and applause.)

President-elect Myers, and to my friend Barry Munitz -- you know, we're all in a lather up here in Washington these days about campaign contributions; everybody hates them, but nobody wants to go to public funding. So we seem destined to some period of hand-wringing. And since we're in a spirit of full disclosure, I have to tell you that in addition to my coming here today, I received a gratuity, which I intend to disclose before the whole world. I complimented Barry on his watch, and he gave it to me. (Laughter and applause.) And, cravenly, as we politicians are, I took it without blinking. (Laughter.) He swears it cost \$18.00. (Laughter.)

But I'll tell you why I bragged on it -- and all of you more or less of my age group can identify with this -- look how big the numbers are, I can -- (laughter.) It's the first watch I've ever seen I don't need glasses for. The more expensive they are, the smaller the numbers get. (Laughter.) So, thank you, Barry.

I would like to begin today, if I might, with a very personal and serious word. This is the first opportunity I have had, really, to say something publicly about the death of Al Shanker yesterday, one of the greatest educators of the 20th century in this country. He was my friend for

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many years. I considered him my colleague. He believed that all children could learn -- with high expectations and high standards, high-quality teaching and high accountability. He literally lived a life that was nothing less than a crusade, with intense passion and power. And I know that all of you will join me in wishing his wife and his family and the members of the American Federation of Teachers the best, and giving them our sadness and our thanks for a remarkable American who did his job very, very well.

I also want to come here to thank you. Secretary Riley said, in his inimitable way, that this is a big day for us -- and this is a big day for us -- starting with the community colleges and their trustees and then going to this organization which represents, I thought at last count, almost 1,700 two- and four-year colleges and universities. Your views matter, your voice is heard, and your endorsement of our college opportunity agenda, including the HOPE Scholarships, the tax deduction for tuition and the large increase in Pell Grants will help to bring that opportunity into reality, and to fulfill my dream of opening the doors of college to every single American who wants to go. Thank you very, very much. I'm grateful to you. (Applause.)

This is a remarkable time in the history of our democracy. At the end of the Cold War we find ourselves as the world's remaining superpower, with a special responsibility to try to shape the future in a way that will advance the cause of peace and prosperity. We find our own economy strong and growing, producing more jobs in the last four years than in any comparable term in our history, with record numbers of new businesses being formed each and every year.

We know that this is a time of enormous change, but the impulse to satisfaction I'm sure is great. Normally, when democracies have times this good, one of two things happens -- sometimes both at the same time -- people get very self-satisfied and begin to relax, and, therefore, miss the underlying currents of what is really going on for the future; or they become too easily preoccupied with small matters and begin to divide among themselves over things that bring them down, instead of lift them up. We must give in to neither impulse.

Because the growth of the global economy and the absolute explosion in scientific and technical information associated with the Information Age give us an opportunity -- but not a guarantee, an opportunity -- for undreamed of new jobs and careers, for greater knowledge and understanding, not just for greater material wealth, but for enhancements in the quality of lives for families and communities, it is literally true that in the era toward which we are moving more people than ever before in all of human history will have a chance to live out their dreams. But it is also true that the chance cannot be realized unless we give them the power to make the most of their own lives. So this is no time to rest.

Four years ago, we knew we couldn't rest, and we set about laying the foundation for progress by changing the economic policy of the country to focus on investing in our people, getting our fiscal house in order, emphasizing science and technology and opening the doors of trade with the rest of the world. We changed our social policy, centering it clearly on family and community and focusing on action instead of rhetoric. The result is that we've had marked drops

in crime, the biggest drop in welfare rolls in the history of the country, the Family and Medical Leave law, action to stop teenagers from being exposed illegally to the sales and marketing of cigarettes, and a number of other initiatives.

Our foreign policy has begun to articulate the world that we want to make, working in an interdependent way with allies and friends of like mind throughout the world not only to advance the cause of peace and freedom and prosperity, but to stand up against the new threats to our security.

Along the way, we have fought -- and I hope largely resolved -- the battle that has dominated America for nearly 20 years now over what the proper role of our nation's government should be. You hardly hear anyone saying anymore that government is the enemy.

It was interesting -- in the last couple of days Hillary and I went to see -- or brought in the movie, because we have a theater at the White House -- it's the best perk of the job, I think -- (laughter) -- but we had about all the seriousness we could stand, and we watched that movie, "Dante's Peak," about the volcano exploding. And I couldn't help thinking, you know, the hero works for the U.S. Geological Service, and his life is saved in the end by a contraption developed not here at home for uses on the ground, but by NASA for use in space. And I thought, the government is not the enemy. The role of the government is to create the conditions and to give people the tools to build strong lives and families and communities and a strong nation -- and to give people the chance to live out their dreams.

Now that that foundation has been laid, and now that I believe we have also moved away from the very dangerous rhetoric of the last several years that seeks to divide us against one another based on our racial or ethnic or religious or other differences, toward an understanding that it is actually a great Godsend for us to be the world's most multiethnic, multiracial, multireligious democracy, we now can actually seize the opportunities that are before us. But the first and most important thing we have to do is to recognize that, beginning at the beginning, our education system will not provide us the opportunity to do that unless we change it.

For the beginning years we have to raise standards. For our colleges and universities, which are plainly the finest in the world, we simply have to make sure that the access is there for everyone who should go to have a chance to go.

The main point I want to make is that we actually are in a position now to mold our future untroubled by war abroad or disruption at home in a way that is very, very rare in human history. We have no idea how long this moment of tranquility will last. We have no idea how long we will be fully free to wake up and say, what am I going to do today, without being impinged upon by some external force that will shape us.

I was interested when the Secretary talked about Abraham Lincoln and the land grant. I used to teach at a land grant school, so I like that. But it's interesting that President Lincoln signed that land grant bill during the Civil War. And Lincoln once said during the Civil War --

he gave a statement today that I would be ridiculed nationwide if I said -- he said, my policy is to have no policy; I am controlled by events. Well, of course, he did have a policy -- he had the most important one of all -- I'm going to hold this Union together if we all have to die to do it, including me. That was his policy. But he also told an important truth. When the wheel runs off and things fall apart, you are to some extent controlled by events.

Today in a rare moment, America is not especially controlled by events, but we cannot be unmindful of the larger historical trends which will shape our future. And it is the moral obligation of every person in a position of responsibility in the United States to take this opportunity -- not to lay down on the job and not to fall into mindless debates, but to lift our sights and our visions to take advantage of this rare moment and make the most of it. And we could do no better than to give our people the finest set of educational opportunities in the world and to make sure every single one of them has those opportunities. (Applause.)

I was encouraged by the report I got out back, very brief, about the words that Senator Lott said earlier here today. During the Cold War we had a bipartisan foreign policy, because -- literally because the future of the country was at stake -- everybody agreed we'd like to fight with you and we'd like to kick you out if you're not in our party, but politics should stop at the water's edge.

Today, in the Information Age, politics should stop at the schoolhouse door, because our security depends upon our ability to give all our people the finest education in the world. (Applause.) My shorthand expression for what we're trying to do -- and you will all recognize there are many other things at stake -- is that we have to create an America in which every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college, and every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime. My balanced budget makes an unprecedented commitment to these goals -- \$51 billion next year. But far more than money is required.

Three weeks ago at the State of the Union I issued a call to action for American education based on 10 principles necessary to prepare our people for the 21st century. First, we have to set world-class standards for our schools and develop a system of accountability, beginning for the first time with national standards-based reading tests in the 4th grade and math tests in the 8th grade.

Second, we have to make sure we have the best teachers in the world.

Third, we must make sure that every child can read on his or her own by the third grade. I see my friend the President of the Miami-Dade Community College out here, the largest community college in our country and one of the most diverse student bodies. Forty percent of the 8-year-olds in this country cannot read a book on their own -- 40 percent. And we have to do better than that if we want all of our children to be in two- and four-year colleges when their time comes.

Fourth, we have to make sure parents are more deeply involved in a constructive way in their child's learning from birth. The First Lady and I are going to host a conference on early childhood learning and brain development in the spring here.

Fifth, we have to give parents more power to choose the right public schools for their children and encourage school reforms like charter schools that set and meet high standards.

Sixth, we should encourage the teaching of character education in our schools -- and Secretary Riley has done a marvelous job of that -- and promote order and discipline at the same time by supporting local school initiatives, like school uniforms or truancy enforcement or curfews, and demanding zero tolerance for guns and drugs. I have seen in the most difficult neighborhoods in this country that children do not have to put up with violent, disruptive and destructive school environments. There are schools that are succeeding against all the odds. And if some can, all can. And until they all do none of us should be satisfied.

Seventh, we should support school construction at the national level. I believe, for the very first time -- because we have record numbers of school populations now, for the first time we've got a group bigger than the baby-boomers coming through, and the schools are growing at record rates while their facilities are deteriorating at record rates.

Eighth, we should make sure that learning is available for a lifetime by transforming what can only be described as a tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly to workers. People who need and are eligible for federal training help, nearly all of them live within driving distance of a community-based educational institution that can give them what they need. And we do not need a lot of federal programs to get between them and those institutions. I have been trying for four years to pass this program. I hope you will help me get this done in this session of Congress, to create a new G.I. Bill for America's Workers that simply gives people a skill grant and lets them take it to the institution of education nearest them most able to meet their needs.

Ninth, we are determined to connect every classroom and library in this country to the Internet by the year 2000 and we're making good progress on that. But finally, and the thing that you have endorsed today, is our effort to meet the last goal, to throw open the doors of college to all people who are willing to work for the opportunity.

As the Secretary said, we have always expanded education. He began with Abraham Lincoln, and we might have begun with Thomas Jefferson, who advocated even as he advocated buying Louisiana -- for which I'm very grateful; otherwise I wouldn't be President -- (laughter) -- and America becoming a continental nation, that we should educate all of our children. Thomas Jefferson even advocated the education of every single child, boy or girl, of slave families in America. And we know from the beginning that it was the education of our leaders that gave them the vision to chart the course that has brought to this day.

I do believe, based on the sheer economic realities and the need for greater understanding of our interdependence in the world in which we're living that we have to make the first two years of college as universal as a high school education is today. Fifteen years ago, the typical worker with a college degree earned 38 percent more than a high school graduate; today, it is 69 percent. Two years of college alone means a 20-percent increase in learning and a quarter of a million dollars more in earnings over a lifetime.

Now, over the past four years we have put in place an unprecedented college opportunity strategy: Student loans provided directly to people who need them and that enable people to repay those loans as a percentage of their income. AmeriCorps, which has already helped 70,000 young people earn their way through college by serving their communities and their country. Two hundred thousand more students in Work Study as a result of last year's budget, and a very large increase in Pell Grants last year, taking the maximum grant to \$2,700 and expanding the number of people eligible.

The plan I have put before the Congress in my balanced budget would expand work-study again so that one million students will be able to work their way through college by the year 2000. We want 100,000 of these new work-study students to join our America Reads efforts to help make sure all our 8-year-olds can read independently by the year 2000.

I know that more than 80 college presidents have already committed thousands of their work-study students to work as reading tutors. I thank those of you who are here leading this effort, many of you on the front row here, and I'd like to ask all the rest of you to join us. Go back home, look at how many people you've got in work-study, see how many you could allocate to this effort.

We're going to have about 35,000 AmeriCorps students trained especially to train tutors. We're going to challenge the parents and the schools to open up to make sure we can get these volunteers in there to teach these kids to read. We cannot expect the schools to operate efficiently if children have to leave the third grade not even being able to read. They will never learn what they need to know. And college students will relate well to these young kids and have a chance to literally revolutionize future learning in America.

A lot of these children are not just poor kids, they simply -- many of them come out of cultures where their first language is not English and they did not learn to read properly. We should not let them go past the 3rd grade without knowing we have all done everything we humanly can to make sure that they can read independently. So I thank those of you from the bottom of my heart, who have volunteered already, and I ask the rest of you to join in that crusade. We need you and it will make all the difference.

Finally, let me say we have got to do more in other areas. For three years in a row now we've expanded Pell Grants for deserving students. But our budget this year, our balanced budget contains the largest increase in Pell Grant scholarships in 20 years. We are adding \$1.7

billion in grants, a 25-percent increase, which will make 348,000 more students eligible -- many of them older students -- and will increase the maximum grant to \$3,000. And for 4 million low and middle income students the budget will cut student loan fees in half.

But if we're truly going to set a new standard, a 14-year standard, we've got to do more. That's why I have proposed America's HOPE scholarship based on the Georgia pioneering program; two years of a tax credit of \$1,500 for college tuition, enough to pay for the typical community college. We know it will work because of the testimonial you have already heard from President Knapp.

Second, I propose a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school to help families send children or parents to college, or to graduate, or medical school, or any other education after high school.

Third, I proposed an expanded IRA, expanded in terms of eligibility, in terms of who can save and in terms of purpose, so that families can save tax free to pay for education. Together these proposals mean that a family could save money for college tuition and never pay a penny of taxes on it. For example, families could put up to \$2,000 of income into the IRA each year without paying taxes, then withdraw up to \$10,000 a year for tuition and deduct that from income so that there will not be any taxes when they're paid out.

Cutting taxes to help people pay directly for college has never been done before on a national level. But we have cut taxes for years to help people buy a home or invest in a business because that's the way we felt we could encourage people to invest in their future and build the American Dream. And it has worked.

In the last four years we have seen homeownership rise to a 15-year high, and if the rate of increase continues by the year 2000 more than two-thirds of Americans will live in their own home -- an all-time record. In the last four years we have seen in each successive year a record number of new businesses formed in America. Today we ought to have that same kind of encouragement to invest in education, an even more important investment for the future. And I think that it is highly appropriate to adopt this device to achieve that goal.

Let me assure you, the Treasury Department is committed to working with the Department of Education and all of you to make this tax plan work. The IRS will not interfere with the affairs of educational institutions. We are committed to making this simple and straightforward for the academic community and especially for the students of every age. The plan will give families the power to choose the right education for themselves and the flexibility to decide the best way in which to pay for that education.

Now, just think about what this could mean. A young person who can't afford tuition or whose family can't afford it can now go down to a local community college right away and sign

up if they meet the standards, because the HOPE Scholarship will pay for it. Someone with a new family who is worried about college costs down the road can multiply his or her savings power by putting tuition money in an IRA tax-free every year while the children are growing up. Then, when they're 40 and worried they might need more education to move ahead, but can't spare time off from work, not only can they withdraw from the IRA for the kids, but the parents can to part-time, or at night. But all can go to college without tax consequences.

My plan is simple: \$1,500 a year tax cut for individuals to pay for college for two years; a \$10,000 a year tax deduction for families for any year of tuition after high school; an expanded IRA to help families save tax-free for education, plus the more and larger Pell Grant scholarships for deserving students, 300,000 more work-study positions, AmeriCorps, the Direct Loan Program.

This plan will throw open the doors of college and give every American the great chance to make the most of the world that we are moving into. College is opportunity for tomorrow. And creating that opportunity is our responsibility today.

I thank you again for your support of this plan. As we work in the weeks and months ahead to craft a bipartisan balanced budget, your endorsement today will be an historic element in making sure that this will be part of the ultimate budget plan. We need a balanced budget, but it has to reflect our values and it has to pave the way to a better future.

Today, we have committed to expanding educational opportunities by enacting the Hope Scholarship tax cut, the college tax deduction, the Pell Grant increases, the work-study increases. I thank you for standing with us. You are standing for opportunity for generations to come in a way that will change America forever for the better.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END

2:40 P.M. EST

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

Good morning. Before I depart, I want to say a few words about the importance of education standards.

This week, an independent report showed that students in our nation's cities are failing to master the basic skills they need to succeed in the world of tomorrow -- reading, math, and science.

Tomorrow, I will be traveling to Texas where I will talk about education and I call upon all Americans -- and especially education leaders -- to support national standards

We cannot afford to let any of our children down by letting them fall behind.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Augusta, Georgia)

For Immediate Release

February 5, 1997

general- to
Georgia

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY OF
AUGUSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Athletic Center
Augusta State University
Augusta, Georgia

3:00 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much, Tanya. She did a great job, didn't she? Let's give her a hand. I thought she was terrific. (Applause.)

Dr. Bloodworth, thank you for making me feel so welcome here at Augusta State today. I must say when I came in, Dr. Bloodworth had his whole family there, and you can't say that he's not trying to practice what he preaches -- his son, Paul, has a Georgia HOPE Scholarship, and his daughter, Nicole, was an AmeriCorps volunteer last year. If we could get everybody to follow that lead we'd have no problems at all in America in no time. That's great. (Applause.)

I thank Mayor Sconyers for coming to meet me at the airport and for being here. He made a politician's promise -- he promised that I would get some good barbecue before I left town, and I'm going to see if he keeps it. (Applause.)

I thank the many members of the Georgia legislature who are here, and I know they have a pivotal role in education. My good friend, Commissioner Tommy Irvin, I thank him for being here. I thank Secretary Riley for being willing to serve as Education Secretary. He has established a remarkable record already, and we just got started. And I thank him. (Applause.)

I thank Senator Coverdell and Congressman Norwood for coming down here with me on Air Force One today, along with Senator Cleland. I have to tell you this -- I've known Max Cleland for a long time. I admire him for many things. When we go back home on Air Force One today, he will be landing at Andrews Air Force base for the first time since he landed there as a terribly wounded veteran from the Vietnam War. He has come a long way, and we are

proud of him. (Applause.)

I'd like to thank the other students who are here from the Augusta Technical Institute and its President Terry Elam -- (applause) -- Dr. Francis Tedesco and the students of the Medical College of Georgia -- (applause) -- Dr. Shirley Lewis and the students of Payne College -- (applause) -- and, of course, the students and faculty of Augusta State. (Applause.) Thank you for being here.

When I arrived today, to read the local paper, I was wondering if any of you would come because the local paper has a history of Presidents coming to Augusta and there were so many and they came so often, I thought this might just be another day at the office. (Laughter.) I read that my very first predecessor, George Washington, visited a precursor of your school -- the Richmond School in 1791. (Applause.) And -- Richmond Academy -- and he, George Washington apparently did not give a speech, instead he sat through oral exams. (Laughter.) I'm glad you're letting me talk today. (Laughter.) After the State of the Union last night, I'm so tired I couldn't pass any exam, written or oral. But it's certainly good to be a place where no one I hear speaking has an accent. (Laughter and applause.)

In my State of the Union address last night, I sought to challenge all of you to rise to the moment of preparing America for the 21st century. What I want all of you to understand is two things. Number one, we really are moving into a time where more people from more walks of life will have a chance to rise higher and to live out more of their dreams than at any time in history. You must believe that. That is true -- not a guarantee but a chance.

Number two, we all tend to think that the times we live in are normal. If you look at the whole sweep of human history, if you look at the whole sweep of American history, this is a highly unusual time. Why? Because we now enjoy both prosperity and peace, but we're living in a time of such change we can't afford to just sit back and enjoy it, because the speed at which we're changing the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world is so great and its scope is so profound that we have lots of work to do.

But this is a blessing, not a curse. Very rarely have our people in this country ever had the freedom just to come together and totally shape our own future -- unforced by a war, unforced by domestic turmoil, unforced by depression. We can sit here and construct a future for the children of America that is better than any time in all of human history, and we had better get at the work of doing it. (Applause.)

I came here today for some good reasons. Senator Cleland mentioned that President Roosevelt used to come to Georgia a lot, to Warm Springs. When Roosevelt came here and saw the plight of so many Georgians living in abject poverty, he got the inspiration to electrify rural America. For us it's hard to imagine today. Most families are wondering whether they can afford a computer in their home. When Roosevelt came to Georgia, a lot of families couldn't turn on a light. And he had this inspiration that electricity ought to be given to something

besides people who lived in the cities. And the rural electrification effort was born, out of the inspiration he saw in Georgia.

And now, as we prepare for the new century, we have to give people another way to turn the lights on. We have to give everybody the tools to make the most of their own lives. And the most important thing we can do is to give people a good education -- not just in terms of what they know, but to put all of our people in a position that they can keep on learning for a lifetime. And that's why I came to Georgia -- because Governor Miller, with the HOPE Scholarship, with the pre-kindergarten program, with the commitment to hook up all your schools to the Internet, with all the other initiatives, has turned the lights on, and America is seeing the light. (Applause.)

It is no secret that I am a great admirer of your Governor. He spoke for me in New York in 1992 and talked about the house his mother built with her own hands. And with his thick Georgia accent, he pierced the deafest ears of people who never heard anybody talk like that before. (Laughter.) And no one who heard that speech will ever forget the vivid image of his mother crossing the creek with the rocks in her hand.

Governor Miller is the son of a teacher. He became a teacher himself. He's given his life to bringing education to every child here. But he has something else that's very important and embodied in that Marine Corps pin he wears on his lapel every day. Whatever he decides to do, he does with the same conviction and intensity and doggedness that he showed when he was a member of the United States Marines. And I'm glad he's fighting for you and your future. And I'm grateful that he's fought for me. (Applause.)

I also want to say to you something else. In the world in which we are living, we can do things together that will create the opportunities for people to make a great deal of their lives. But you will have to work harder to make more of it than the people did when rural electrification came in. We could come together and set up an authority and run those power lines out and then all people had to do was flip a switch and the lights came on. Now we can come together and create the greatest structure of education in the world, but you can't just flip a switch, you have to go to work. You have to make the most of those opportunities.

No one can force-feed an education. People have to want it badly, deeply, in a way that makes learning not only important, but fun. But it is work, and it is work that every American citizen must be prepared to do for himself or herself, and with all of our children, every single one of them. (Applause.)

Last year I had the opportunity to speak at Princeton University in New Jersey. It was a great honor for me because they only ask Presidents to speak every 50 years, when they celebrate a 50th anniversary. And I just sort of fell into it. But I talked to them about how important it was for people not to believe that America's future rested solely on the young people who would graduate from our most elite institutions of higher education; that America's future rested on our

ability to give everybody a higher education. (Applause.)

And I asked Governor Miller to go up there with me, and there we were, two southern boys sort of ogling the Ivy League. And I asked the people of Princeton to support taking Georgia's HOPE Scholarship national, to give hope to all of America with a HOPE Scholarship in every state, in every community. That's what I asked Congress to approve last night -- \$1,500 tax credit to make a typical community college or other two-year program available to virtually everyone in the United States, and a \$10,000 tax deduction for the cost of any tuition after high school at any program; undergraduate or graduate; and an expanded IRA you can withdraw from tax-free for education; and the biggest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years. We can educate America with that program. (Applause.)

But I ask you to remember, too, that last night I said there were 10 principles to this program. Secretary Riley, in no time at all given the miracles of modern technology, has got them written up for us here. We'll be glad to send you a copy if you want one. But there are 10 things we have to do. Even though we're balancing the budget and cutting spending, I recommended \$51 billion for education -- by far the biggest amount of money the national government has ever committed to education. (Applause.)

But it is not enough. And briefly, let me say to you that there are other things we must do, the most important of which is to make up our minds that we are finally going to achieve international excellence in education, and that we do believe that all our children can learn. A lot of people don't believe that. I believe people perform according to their expectations, their support, and how we treat them and what we offer them. (Applause.)

We should begin with the proposition that every 8-year-old should be able to read, every 12-year-old should be able to get on to the Internet, every 18-year-old should be able to go on to college, every adult should keep on learning for a lifetime. We must start with the elemental principle that there should be national standards of excellence in education -- not federal government standards, not something that takes away local control, not something that undermines the state's role in leading the way in education -- but algebra is the same in Georgia as it is in Utah. (Applause.) We have to set up national standards for what every student must learn.

Teachers should be trained to help students meet these standards. There should be national tests reflecting the standards. All the teachers will understand this when I say it: there are lots of standardized tests; what we need are tests that reflect standards. And they're two very different things. (Applause.)

Every state, by 1999, should agree not only to have high standards, but to have all their 4th graders take a national test, the same one, in reading; and all their 8th graders take a national test, the same one, in mathematics.

If you saw last night, if you watched the State of the Union, you know that there were 20 school districts that did something a lot of school districts wouldn't dare do, in Northern Illinois. They agreed to go together to try to achieve international excellence in math and science for their 8th graders. And they agreed to take, with students from all over the world, the Third International Math and Science Survey. It is truly an international test reflecting what students should know worldwide at that point in their careers.

because they had the courage to say, we want to know how we stand against what we have to know. And I want you to support everybody in America doing that. (Applause.)

A lot of this intellectual work is like every other kind of work -- we have to set the standards high and then train to meet the standards. People who work out can't do 100 pushups the first time they try. Not every student, not every school district, not every state will do all that well on these examinations the first time they're given. That is not the point. The point is to find out what we know and what we need to learn. We're not trying to put anybody down. We've got a whole country to lift up to a new century where learning will determine our future. (Applause.)

The second thing we have to do is to value our teachers more, to train them better and support them more. (Applause.) Many of our finest educators have worked hard to establish a system of national credentials for excellence in teaching. Five hundred master teachers have been certified by the national board since 1995. I offered a budget to the Congress last night that would permit 100,000 more teachers to be certified, so we could have at least one teacher in every school in America who had been through a rigorous training program that that teacher could then share with every other teacher in the school -- to support the teachers who are going to determine the quality of education of our children. (Applause.)

The third thing I want to do is to do more to help our children read. There was a story in the press a couple of days ago which pointed out that we now have four school districts in America where the children in the school districts speak as their native tongue over 100 different languages. You want me to say that again? That's unbelievable, isn't it? Four. Atlanta -- I don't know how many tongues there are, but Atlanta is the headquarters to more international companies than any other city in the country. They must have 50 or 60 there.

Now, one consequence of this, along with increasing poverty over the last 20 years of young children, is that 40 percent of our 8-year-olds can't read at grade level. And that simply means they can't read a 3rd grade book by themselves -- four out of 10. How many are capable of doing it with the brain they've got up there? Nearly all of them. You must believe this, otherwise we're just up here talking to ourselves. Nearly all of them are capable of doing this.

So we have a lot of work to do. And our schools cannot do it all alone. We need more help from the parents, but we also need more help from the rest of us. I am committed to mobilizing a citizen army of a million people to be trained as tutors and to be willing to tutor children in every community in this country so that by the year 2000 every 8-year-old can pick

up a book and say, I can read this book all by myself. And I want you to help us do it. (Applause.)

We're going to use a lot of our AmeriCorps volunteers to mobilize the system, but we need a million people. I have asked that at least 100,000 of the 200,000 new work-study slots that we created in last year's budget be devoted to college students who are willing to work as tutors. And last night I said 60 presidents have already pledged thousands of their work-study students to do that. I hope some of you in this room will say, I'd be honored to try to teach a child to read so that child can have the same opportunity I have today to be a student in a university. I hope you will do that. Your country needs you to do that. (Applause.)

The fourth point I want to make is that we have to start teaching children very early. Georgia has what I believe is the most extensive pre-kindergarten program in the United States. Good for you. (Applause.) Good for you. We have extended Head Start coverage to 3-year-olds in the last couple of years. And that's a very good thing.

But we have to begin even earlier. We now know that children's brains develop more than half of their capacity -- not what they know, but their capacity to learn -- within the first four years. We now know that a child with parents who have confidence that they can help that child and understand what they're supposed to do will get as many as 700,000 positive contacts from the parents in the first four years of life. A child with a parent who feels ill-equipped for the job, who has no idea what to do, who desperately loves her child but just doesn't know, may have given that child as few as 150,000 positive contacts in the first four years. You tell me which child is going to be better when they're 18, given what we know now from these scientists.

So we have got to support -- all of us -- everything we can do to help get out there and convince parents, even if they don't have a good education, they can do something very important for their children from the day they are born. That is my wife's strong commitment, and mine. We're going to bring together scientists and educators from all over America this spring at a conference on early childhood development and the brain. And we're going to try to take all these new discoveries, so that when our children do get to school, the teachers will be able to do what they want to do with them, because they have been given the opportunity to develop in a wholesome, positive way in the first three or four years of their lives. And I hope you will support everything that is being done here to that end. (Applause.)

Next we want to support more innovation in our public schools. And I want to compliment Georgia for its magnet schools and for the charter school program you've just started. It's unfamiliar to most Americans, but basically charter schools are public schools that are free from some of the rules and regulations that other schools have to follow, created by teachers, parents, and others with a certain mission. But they can exist only as long as they fulfill the mission. If they don't produce educational excellence, they don't keep their charter. And Georgia is leading the way there, too.

Last night I asked the Congress to give me enough funds to support 3,000 of those schools -- that's seven times as many as there are in the United States today. But that, again, is an important part of innovation. Eventually, we need to get to the point where every school is just like these charter schools -- every school is just like these magnet schools. They all have their own personality, they only have their own culture, they have their own standards, and they work. But the best way to do it is to create models in every school district of the United States, and that's what the charter school movement will do. And that's another reason I'm very proud of the state of Georgia for trying to lead the way. (Applause.)

The next point I want to make is, somebody has got a sign up there to say they have a middle school and they wear school uniforms. Hold that sign up there. "Mr. President, Glen Hills Middle School wears uniforms." Thank you very much. (Applause.) Stand up -- without the sign. Stand up. There you go, good for you. (Applause.) Now, I promise we did not organize this -- I didn't even know they were going to be there.

(Laughter.) Last night I said our schools need to teach character education, we need to teach young people to be good citizens. And we need to support these schools when they try to find their own way to do that. Schools that require school uniforms, that's one way to do that.

I've been in school districts where the crime rate dropped, the violence in the school dropped, the dropout rate dropped, and the wealthier kids as well as the poorer kids liked it better when they adopted their own uniform of their own choosing in a way that helped them preserve order in the schools. That's one way of creating school identity. It normally works in grade school and junior high better than high school, for obvious reasons. But it can have a positive impact.

The point is that we need to recognize that our schools are molding the character of our young people. And we should not discourage them. One of the best things Secretary Riley has done, of all the wonderful things he's done, is to get out here and push teaching of character education and to try to make it clear that we do not have to have a value-free environment in schools -- that is cancerous. We should have a valued environment in the schools. And I thank him for that, and I know you believe that. (Applause.)

The seventh thing we're trying to do is help the school districts that are absolutely overwhelmed with growth, with a lot of buildings that are falling down, get out of the hole they're in. The national government's never done this before, and I wouldn't be doing it now, but we have 52 million public school students, the largest number in history -- with more buildings falling down than anytime in history. I've been in school districts where half the kids were going to class in trailers outside the regular building.

And we need to do what we can to support local efforts. So if people at the local level are willing to put up their funds to try to build the buildings and repair the buildings that the schools need, we want to be in a position to support what they're doing. And we think with a modest

expenditure, we can help to spark \$20 billion more in school construction and repair over the next four years. And that's what we intend to do. And I hope you'll support that. (Applause.)

Just two other points very quickly. Learning has got to become a lifetime endeavor. Ask someone who works in a bank whether it's different being a bank teller than it was 10 years ago. Go into any working environment and see how different it is now from the way it was just a few years ago. I spent a lot of time working with law enforcement. Do you want to know one reason that the crime rate's dropped in America for five years in a row for the first time in years and years and years -- is that our law enforcement officers in a lot of our bigger cities where the crime rate's very high have become basically high-tech managers of criminal justice resources to support local neighborhoods.

In New York, they had a precipitous drop in the crime rate when they realized that they could have computer reports every single day of every offense in that vast city, put it up on a map, study the patterns of crime, and put the police into the neighborhood working with the people -- changing it on a daily basis.

Every kind of work is different. That's why I have asked the Congress to pass what I call a G.I. Bill. You heard Max Cleland talking about the G.I. Bill -- what I call a G.I. Bill for America's Workers.

We've got 70 different training programs the federal government has put up for people who are unemployed or underemployed over time. Every one of them had a good justification. Today, we don't need that anymore. Nearly every America is within driving distance of a community college or another community-based educational institution like this one --nearly every America. So I say, get rid of that, put the money in a pot, send a skill grant to every adult who's eligible for it, and let that man or woman figure out where to get the best education. They'll figure it out in no time. And it will be a place like Augusta State. That's what will happen. And I hope you will ask your members of Congress to support that. (Applause.)

Last thing I want to say is this: We have got to do what Governor Miller plans to do here; we have got to harness the full force of technology to every school in the United States. Now, I have this argument all the time with people my age who aren't very good on a computer -- that includes me; I'm not saying they aren't and I am -- but a lot of people come up to me and they say, now, Mr. President, I like your education program, but I think you're overdoing this Internet deal. I mean, you know, what good is the Internet if people can't read and write?

The point is that a lot of these kids will be more interested in learning to read and write if they have access to technology. And if we hook up all of our schools to the Internet, it will mean that for the very first time in the entire history of the United States of America, the kids in the poorest schools, the kids in the most isolated rural schools, and the kids in the wealthiest schools will all have access to the same universe of knowledge, in the same way, at the same time.

That's never happened in the history of the country before. It will revolutionize what it means to be a student. And it will also say to all these kids that now feel like nobody cares about them, you're just as important as anybody else. You matter. You can learn whatever you want. You can be whatever you want to be.

This is not about technology. This is about unleashing the power of the human mind that resides in every single one of our young people. So I say, what Zell Miller is doing here in Georgia will put you ahead of the pack, but the most important thing is, it make everyone in America want to do this even faster than I thought we could do it. Every class -- every class, every school, eventually every home will have a connection to every school through a computer.

And let me just give you one example. I visited a school district in New Jersey that was doing so poorly the state was literally going to shut it down and take it over. Most of the students were lower income. Many of them were from first-generation immigrant families whose parents did not speak English. And I saw the Bell Atlantic phone company, along with some other companies, go in there, put computers in all the classrooms, give them to all the kids, and to a lot of the children who were having trouble, actually put personal computers in the homes and teach the parents, the immigrant parents, how to e-mail the teachers and the principals.

And you say, why are they doing all that? These people need to learn to read, write, count, speak basic English. All I know is, three years later this school district that was going to be shut down had a lower dropout rate, a higher graduation rate, and higher test scores than the average in the state of New Jersey, which has the second highest per capita income in the United States of America. Don't tell me all of our kids can't learn. They can learn if we do it right and we help them and we support them. (Applause.)

But again I say, we have a limited amount of time. You don't know how long America can go in a state of prosperity and peace where everything looks rosy to the country. You don't know how long we can go still tolerating in a passive way the loss of as many kids as we're losing to crime, to drugs, to all the problems we have. We don't have a lot of time. There really are just a few days over a thousand days until the year 2000. But very few societies in all human history have had the opportunity we have to have peace, prosperity, opportunity, and the chance to forge our own future.

This is a call to action. I am committed to doing my part. You must do yours.

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

END

3:40 P.M. EST

opening to
Georgia

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Augusta, Georgia)

For Immediate Release

February 5, 1997

OPENING REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT EDUCATION DISCUSSION

Athletic Center
Augusta State University

1:17 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, I want to thank all of you for agreeing to be part of this. And I'll be very brief because I want to hear from you.

I very much appreciate the fact that Senator Coverdell and Senator Cleland and Congressman Norwood came down with me today, along with Governor and Mrs. Miller. And I wanted to, after the State of the Union last night, which I believe was the most extensive treatment a President has ever given to the question of education in the State of the Union -- I wanted to come here because I know a lot about what you've done here and what you're trying to do, and I think it's very important that the American people respond to the challenge that I laid out last night to make American education the best in the world, to understand that it won't be done overnight, and not to be afraid of trying to reach higher standards.

I went over -- and I won't belabor it now, but this is a little booklet that I had done that Secretary of Education Riley, who is here with us today, put together for us, incorporating the 10 points that I made in the State of the Union last night. But in virtually every one of these areas, the state of Georgia is trying to move forward. And that's the important thing. Whether it's opening the doors of college education with a HOPE Scholarship, or the pre-kindergarten program, or the remarkable thing you're trying to do on the Internet which will have a huge impact around the country if you do it, because then a lot of other states will get in here and help us. The Vice President and I have been trying to get all the schools hooked up by the year 2000, but we might get there ahead of time if every state would take the kind of action that you're taking here.

Then the thing that I really want to focus on is how we can achieve the objectives that were set out way back in 1989 by the governors and then President Bush -- how can we achieve those national education goals. The only way we can ever do it is if we maintain the right blend of local control of our schools, state leadership, but adherence to high national standards so everybody understands what the bar is we're trying to reach.

And what we're going to try to do is to get the states and the school districts of the country and all the teachers organizations, the other educators and the parents especially, to accept the notion that there ought to be high standards and we ought to measure to see how our kids are doing -- not to put them down, but to lift them up, and to support the whole educational process, and make a specific effort to mobilize a lot of people to make sure our children are literate and that they can read independently at the appropriate level, at least by the time they get out of the 3rd grade.

So that's what we're going to do. And I think -- what I hope will come out of this today is that by our being here people will see what you're trying to do in Georgia; they'll be interested in it; it will spark similar activities around the country and we'll see a kind of a cascading effect. You know, when the American people make up their mind to do something, they can get out ahead of the leaders in a hurry, and that's a good thing.

When we started this hooking up the Internet, for example, we went to California, which is our biggest state, and had a Net Day and hooked up 20 percent of the schools in California. And we had this organized effort to get everybody else to do it. And within no time, the amount of activity outstripped the organization; people just went on and did it, just like you're doing. And that's what you want to happen.

So I'm very hopeful, I'm very excited. And I hope that now we can just hear from you. And, Mr. Swearingen, I think you're going to run this show, so --

Q We'll try, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: -- the floor is yours.

END

1:21 P.M. EST

MORE

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 13, 1997

Bill Signing
ceremony

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT BILL SIGNING CEREMONY

The East Room

10:29 A.M. EST

You may have to consider a move from math to public service. (Laughter.)

Well, thank you, Philip and Tina Israel. Thank you, Kikuyu Shaw. Mr. Vice President, Secretary Riley, Secretary Herman, Deputy Secretary Thurm, all the members of Congress who are here; and Mrs. Udall, thank you for coming.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I make my remarks about this legislation that we have all worked on, I'd like to say a few words about yesterday's United Nations Security Council resolution on Iraq.

Plainly, it sent the right message: comply now with the U.N. resolutions and let the UNSCOM inspection team go back to work. Iraq's announcement this morning to expel the Americans from the inspection team is clearly unacceptable and a challenge to the international community.

Let me remind you all again -- I will say this every time I discuss this issue -- these inspectors, in the last six years, have uncovered more weapons of mass destruction potential and destroyed it than was destroyed in the entire Gulf War. It is important to the safety of the world that they continue their work. I intend to pursue this matter in a very determined way.

I think it's fair to say that this is one of those days in public service that these members of Congress in both parties work for and live for and put up with a lot of the hassles of public life for. We have been on a journey for the last five years to a new century that is now just around the corner, driven by a vision to provide opportunity to everybody who is responsible enough to work for it, to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, and to bring our people together across all the lines that divide us into one America. And we're clearly making progress. Our economy is the strongest in a generation; crime, welfare and unemployment are falling.

I think all of us believe that the best way to sustain and build on that progress is to make sure that all of our people have a world-class education. In my State of the Union address, I challenged our people to join me in a nonpartisan effort to make sure that every eight-year-old can read, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college, every adult can continue to learn for a lifetime. For the very first time, I feel that we are determined to finish that part of our journey.

Congress and the United States of America have answered the call. When I sign this bill into law, I will have the privilege of signing into the record books what is plainly the best year for American education in more than a generation. (Applause.)

First, we are taking historic steps to make sure that every child in America can meet the high national standards of academic achievement that the Israelis spoke about so that every children can master the basics. This bill represents a genuine breakthrough in what is now quite a long effort by many people to achieve national academic standards in the United States.

For the first time we will have workable and generally agreed-upon standards in math and reading. And for the very first time, Congress has voted to support the development of voluntary national tests to measure performance in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math. The tests will be created by an independent, bipartisan organization and will be piloted in schools next October.

The importance of this cannot be overstated. Our children rise with the expectations we set for them. We know that every child can meet high standards if we set them and measure our progress against them. I want to especially thank Senate Bingaman and Representative Miller and everyone else who worked on this particular part of the legislation.

This legislation also takes concrete steps to help our children meet the standards, and indeed, to achieve all our national education goals. It will help every 8-year-old in America read on his or her own by funding the America Reads challenge and expanding national service so that our Americorp members can recruit trained literacy tutors for our schools. Already, over 800 colleges and universities and numerous other organizations are providing tens of thousands of volunteer tutors that are going into our schools every week to help make sure our children can read. We can give our children the extra attention and practice they need so that we can assure that they'll be able to read independently by the end of the 3rd grade if we continue to pursue this.

Second, the bill takes significant steps to ensure that every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet. I must say, I had ambivalent feelings when I realized that Mr. Israel was logging on to the Internet and reading what was on the Web site about the exam. Some day somebody may figure out how to find the actual exam on the Web site. (Laughter.) But I was glad to know you were.

This measure nearly doubles -- nearly doubles -- our national investment in education technology. It puts us well on the way to connecting every classroom and library to the

Information Superhighway by the year 2000, something the Vice President has made a particular commitment to.

And I want to emphasize something else, because I met with a group of young people yesterday in their 20s who were hammering me on this. They said, what difference will it make if you connect every classroom in the country to the Information Superhighway if the teachers aren't trained to use the technology and the kids know more than they do? So I want to emphasize that a big part of this legislation provides investments to make sure that our teachers have the training they need to maximize the use of this new technology.

Third, the bill, along with college tuition tax credits I signed into law this summer and the improvements in the college loan program we have been implementing since 1993, will make it possible for every 18-year-old who's willing to work for it to go on to college. And it gives us a chance to make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as a high school diploma is today. This measure includes the largest increase in Pell Grant scholarships in two decades, raising the maximum grant and serving an additional 220,000 students.

I might add that the Congress -- and I thank the members of this committee who are here -- has added in the last two budgets another 300,000 work-study positions as well.

The bill also promotes innovation and expands public school choice, helping parents, teachers and community leaders to open some 500 new charter schools and clearing the way for 3,000 such schools by early in the next century. It recognizes that learning begins in the earliest years of life and significantly expands investment in Head Start. It challenges teachers to reach higher standards along with students and honors those who do by helping 100,000 more teachers seek certification for the National Board of Teacher Standards as master teachers.

Let me emphasize the significance of the 100,000 figure. The year before last, there were only 500 teachers in the entire country who had been certified as master teachers. Because of the unique training and performance required to gain this certification, it is our firm belief -- and I know Secretary Riley believes this -- if we can get one master teacher certified in every school building in America, it will change the entire culture of teaching across the country and elevate the quality of education dramatically. So this is very important.

The bill brings more to our efforts to build discipline and order and safety and positive activity into the lives of our children, with \$40 million to help schools stay open late, on the weekends and in the summer, to help keep young people off the streets and out of trouble, along with job training for out-of-school youth. Now, let me emphasize the importance of this. Most juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 3:00 in the afternoon and 7:00 at night. While the crime rate has dropped in America dramatically, it's only in the last two years that it's begun to level off among young people.

But we ought to look at this in a positive way. This is an opportunity to take kids who otherwise don't have the institutional support they need, who are capable of getting a good education and being good, productive citizens and giving them the institutional framework

within which to do that. It also helps a lot of them whose parents have to work until later in the evening and cannot be at home.

So it may sound like a little money, but a little money given to a school on a tight budget for this purpose can make all the difference in the world in the lives of a lot of our young people. So I'm very pleased by that. And again I want to thank all the members who are here for what they have done.

I hope now we will use this momentum in education to take some new steps, to pass finally a G.I. Bill for America's Workers that would enable us to give a certificate to any American who needs it to take to the nearest educational institution to learn new skills to re-enter the work place, and to meet the quiet crisis of crumbling and crowded school buildings across America. We have more children in our schools than at any time in our history, with serious overcrowding problems and serious building deterioration problems, which I believe we should help to address.

Let me say finally that this bill continues our efforts to strengthen families on many other fronts. It expands educational opportunity for recent immigrants, children with disabilities, children growing up in our poorest neighborhoods. It significantly increases funding for biomedical research, from cancer to Parkinson's Disease -- and we're particularly glad to have Mrs. Udall with us today -- to the astonishing human genome project. And I would like to thank Congressman Porter and Congressman Obey and Congressman Spratt for the work that they have done on this particular thing. And I would like to especially thank Congressman Upton for the work that he's done on the Parkinson's issue. This is a remarkable, remarkable bill with an astonishing bipartisan commitment to keep our country on the front ranks of medical research.

Finally, it will help to make new, very powerful AIDS therapies more available to needy patients. Along with the FDA reform legislation this Congress has passed that we will be signing in the next several days, moving promising medical therapies to market more quickly in a more efficient way and then making them more available to the people that need them can change the lives and improve the quality as well as the length of lives for many, many tens of thousand of our fellow Americans.

And believe it or not, with all these issues on the education checklist and all the things I just mentioned in health care, these are just some of the important provisions in this bill that honor our duty to prepare our people for the future. As much as any bill I have signed, as much as any bill the Congress has passed in recent years, this bill genuinely does fulfill our strategy of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. I am very proud to sign it into law. And again, let me thank every single person in this room who had anything to do with this enactment, but especially, let me thank the members of Congress who are here for working together in good spirit and honest and principled compromise to hammer out this truly remarkable bill. Thank you very much.

Now, I'd like to ask the members of Congress and the people from the executive departments and our speakers to join me up here while we sign the legislation. (Applause.)

(The bill is signed.) (Applause.)

END

10:40 A.M. EST

early child development
(President + First Lady)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 17, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON
EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

The East Room

10:45 A.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Please be seated. Welcome to the White House and to this very special White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. We are delighted that you can join us today not only here in the East Room, but I want to give a special welcome to the thousands of people who are joining this conference via satellite from universities, hospitals and schools around the country. There are nearly 100 sites in 37 states.

Now, at first glance, it may seem odd to hold a conference here at the White House devoted to talking about baby talk. But that discussion has never been more important, because science, as we will hear from the experts who are with us today, has now confirmed what many parents have instinctively known all along, that the song a father sings to his child in the morning, or a story that a mother reads to her child before bed help lay the foundation for a child's life, and in turn, for our nation's future.

So the President has convened this conference with a clear mission: to give the leading experts in the field of early childhood development, the scientists and pediatricians, the researchers and all of the others, the opportunity to explain their discoveries and to put this invaluable body of knowledge at the service of America's families.

But this is not just for America's families. This information is crucial for anyone in the position of leaving an impression on a young child's growing mind -- day-care workers, teachers, doctors and nurses, television writers and producers, business leaders, government policy-makers, all of us.

It is astonishing what we now know about the young brain and about how children develop. Just how far we have come is chronicled in a report being issued today by the Families and Work Institute, entitled, "Rethinking the Brain." Fifteen years ago, we thought that a baby's

brain structure was virtually complete at birth. Now, we understand that it is a work in progress, and that everything we do with a child has some kind of potential physical influence on that rapidly-forming brain.

A child's earliest experiences, their relationships with parents and care-givers, the sights and sounds and smells and feelings they encounter, the challenges they meet determine how their brains are wired. And that brain shapes itself through repeated experiences. The more something is repeated, the stronger the neuro-circuitry becomes, and those connections, in turn, can be permanent. In this way, the seemingly trivial events of our earliest months that we cannot even later recall -- hearing a song, getting a hug after falling down, knowing when to expect a smile -- those are anything but trivial.

And as we now know, for the first three years of their life, so much is happening in the baby's brain. They will learn to soothe themselves when they're upset, to empathize to get along. These experiences can determine whether children will grow up to be peaceful or violent citizens, focused or undisciplined workers, attentive or detached parents themselves.

We now have reached the point of understanding that a child's mind and a child's body must be nourished. During the first part of the 20th century, science built a strong foundation for the physical health of our children -- clean water and safe food, vaccines for preventable diseases, a knowledge of nutrition, a score of other remarkable other lifesaving achievements. The last years of this century are yielding similar breakthroughs for the brain. We are completing the job of primary prevention, and coming closer to the day when we should be able to ensure the well-being of children in every domain -- physical, social, intellectual, and emotional.

I have very high hopes not only for this conference, but for what I hope will come from it. But there are, however, two things I hope this conference will not do. The first is I hope this information will not burden or overwhelm parents. Parenting is the hardest job in the world, and the information we offer today is meant to help parents, not to make them anxious or imprison them in a set of rules. If you forget to read to your child one night, please, that's okay. (Laughter.)

Think of this conference as a map. And like any good map, it shows you a lot of different ways to get where you need to go. Many American parents have been asking for just such a map. A new survey, "From Zero to Three," the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families shows a real hunger on the part of parents for knowledge on how they can play a positive role in their child's early development. And I hope this conference in one of the ways we answer that call.

The second thing I hope does not happen is to create the impression that once a child's third birthday rolls around, the important work is over. The early years are not the only years. The brain is the last organ to become fully mature anatomically. Neurological circuitry for many

emotions isn't completed until a child reaches 15. So there is always room for appropriate stimulation, loving and nurturing care by adults who are invested in a child. There's always something that concerned adults can do.

And that has special relevance for adoption. Adoptive parents can make an enormous difference for a child at any time, and especially for older children.

That said, here is what I hope the conference will accomplish. I hope it will get across the revolutionary idea that the activities that are the easiest, cheapest and most fun to do with your child are also the best for his or her development -- singing, playing games, reading, story-telling, just talking and listening. Some of my best memories are reading to our daughter, even if I fell asleep in the nine hundredth reading of "Goodnight, Moon." But reading to her when she was young was a joy for Bill and me, and we think also a joy for her. But we had no idea 15, 16, 17 years ago that what we were doing was literally turning on the power in her brain, firing up the connections that would enable her to speak and read at as high a level as she possibly could reach.

I hope that the science presented in this conference will drive home a simple message, one supported in great detail by a report being issued today by the President's Council of Economic Advisors. If we, as a nation, commit ourselves now to modest investments in the sound development of our children, including especially our very youngest children, we will lay the groundwork for an American future with increased prosperity, better health, fewer social ills and ever greater opportunities for our citizens to lead fulfilling lives in a strong country in the next century.

There's a quote I particularly like from the Chilean poet, Gabriella Mistral, that reminds us, "Many things we need can wait; the child cannot. Now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood being made, his mind being developed. To him, we cannot say, tomorrow. His name is today." We have known this instinctively, even poetically; now we know it scientifically.

And I'm pleased to introduce someone who has been saying this and practicing it for a long time -- maybe not in poetry, but certainly in the countless stories and books and songs that he has shared not only with our daughter, but with our nephews and, really, any small child who ever crosses his path. As the President of the United States and as a father, he has acted on these beliefs, putting the well-being of children at the very center of national policy. So it pleases me greatly to introduce my fellow reader of "Good Night, Moon," the President, Bill Clinton. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, and welcome to the White House. I was relieved to hear Hillary say that the brain is the last organ to fully develop. It may yet not be too late for me to learn how to walk down steps. (Laughter.) Or maybe I was thinking it was because I was always hugged when I fell down as a child, I did this

subconsciously on purpose. (Laughter.)

Let me begin by thanking the members of the Cabinet who are here. I see Secretary Riley and Secretary Glickman. I thank Governor Romer and Governor Chiles for being here. I think Governor Miller is coming. There are many others who are here. Congresswoman De Lauro is either here or coming. Thank you, Governor Miller. I see I was looking to the left there. (Laughter.) He's from Nevada -- he just went up five points in the polls when I said that. (Laughter.)

Let me say, first of all, the first time I met Hillary, she was not only a law student, she was working with the Yale Child Study Center, and she began my education in these issues. And for that, I am profoundly grateful. And I thank her for bringing the scientists, the doctors, the sociologists, the others whose work is the basis for our discussion today here. And I, too, want to thank the thousands of others who are joining us by satellite.

This unique conference is a part of our constant effort to give our children the opportunity to make the most of their God-given potential and to help their parents lead the way, and to remind everyone in America that this must always be part of the public's business because we all have a common interest in our children's future.

We have begun the job here over the last four years by making education our top domestic priority, by passing the Family Leave act and now trying to expand it and enact a form of flex time which will give parents more options in how they take their overtime in pay or in time with their children, by the work we have done to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act and by the work we've tried to do to give parents more tools with the v-chip and the television rating system, and the work we are still carrying on to try to stop the advertising and marketing and distribution of tobacco to our children, and other work we've done in juvenile justice and trying to keep our kids away from the dangers of alcohol and drugs.

All these are designed to help our parents succeed in doing their most important job. Now it seems to me maybe the most important thing we can actually do is to share with every parent in America the absolutely stunning things we are learning from new scientific research about how very young children learn and develop. In that regard, I'd like to thank Rob Reiner and others who are committed to distributing this information, and I'd like to thank the media here in our Nation's Capital and throughout the country for the genuine interest that they have shown in this conference.

I think there is an instinctive understanding here that this is a very, very big issue that embraces all of us as Americans, and that if we learn our lessons well and if we're patient in carrying them out, as Hillary said, knowing that there is no perfect way to raise a child, we are likely to have a very positive and profound impact on future generations in this country. So I want to thank, again, all of you for that.

Let me say there are some public programs that bear directly on early childhood development -- the Head Start program, which we've expanded by 43 percent over the last four years; the WIC program, which we've expanded by nearly 2 million participants. I have to say that I was a little disappointed -- or a lot disappointed to see a congressional committee yesterday vote to underfund the WIC program. I hope that if nothing else happens out of this conference, the results of the conference will reach the members of that congressional committee and we can reverse that before the budget finally comes to my desk.

I would also like to remind all of you that this conference is literally just a start. We have to look at the practical implications of this research for parents, for care-givers, for policy-makers, but we also know that we're looking at years and years of work in order to make the findings of this conference real and positive in the lives of all of our children. But this is a very exciting and enormous undertaking.

This research has opened a new frontier. Great exploration is, of course, not new to this country. We have gone across the land, we have gone across the globe, we have gone into the skies, and now we are going deep into ourselves and into our children. In some ways, this may be the most exiting and important exploration of all.

I'm proud of the role that federally-funded research has played in these findings in discovering that the earliest years of life are critical for developing intellectual, emotional and social potential. We all know that every child needs proper nutrition and access to health care, a safe home and an environment; and we know every child needs teaching and touching, reading and playing, singing and talking.

It is true that Chelsea is about to go off to college, but Hillary and I have been blessed by having two young nephews now -- one is about two and one is about three -- and we're learning things all over again that, I must say, corroborate what the scientists are telling us.

We are going to continue to work on this, and I know that you will help us, too. Let me just mention two or three things that we want to work on that we think are important. We've got to do a lot more to improve the quality, the availability and the affordability of child care. Many experts consider our military's child care system to be the best in our country. I'm very proud of that, and not surprised.

The man responsible for administering the Navy's child care system, Rear Admiral Larry Marsh, is here with us today. He leads a system that has high standards, including a high percentage of accredited centers, a strong enforcement system with unannounced inspections, parents have a toll-free number to call and report whatever concerns they may have, training is mandatory and wages and benefits are good, so, staff tends to stay on.

I am proud that the military places such importance on helping the families of the men and women who serve our country in uniform. But it's really rather elementary to know that

they're going to do a lot better on the ships, in the skies, in faraway lands if they're not worried about how their children are faring while they're at work serving America.

To extend that kind of quality beyond the military, I am issuing today an executive memorandum asking the Department of Defense to share its success. I want the military to partner with civilian child care centers to help them improve quality, to help them become accredited, to provide training to civilian child care providers, to share information on how to operate successfully, and to work with state and local governments to give on-the-job training and child care to people moving from welfare to work.

I think this is especially important. Let me say in the welfare reform bill, we put another \$4 billion in for child care. In addition to that, because the states are getting money for welfare reform based on the peak case load in welfare in 1994, and we've reduced the welfare rolls by 2.8 million since then, most states, for a period of time until an extra session comes along, will have some extra funds that they can put into more child care. This gives states the opportunity they have never had before to train more child care workers, to use funds to help even more people move from welfare to work and perhaps even to provide more discounts to low-income workers to make child care affordable for them.

This welfare reform effort, if focused on child care, can train lots of people on welfare to be accredited child care workers and expand the availability of welfare in most of the states of the country. It's not true for every state, because some of them have had smaller drops in the case load and three have had no drops. But, by and large, the welfare reform bill, because of the way it's structured, gives all of you who care about child care about a year or two to make strenuous efforts, state by state, to create a more comprehensive quality system of child care than we have ever had before. And I certainly hope that what we can do here, plus the support of the military, we'll see dramatic advances in that regard.

I'd like to thank the people here who have done that work. And I'd like to say that we are going to hold a second conference, this one devoted exclusively to the child care issue here at the White House in Washington this fall. And I hope all of you who care about that will come back.

The second thing we want to do is to extend health care coverage to uncovered children. The budget I have submitted will extend coverage to as many as 5 million children by the year 2000 with the children's health initiative in the budget proposal -- to strengthen Medicaid for poor children and children with disabilities, to provide coverage for working families through innovative state programs, to continue health care coverage for children of workers who are between jobs. There is an enormous amount of interest in this issue in both parties, I'm happy to say, in the Congress in this session. And I quite confident that if we'll all work together, we can get an impressive expansion in health care coverage for children in this congressional session.

I'm pleased that Dr. Jordan Cohen, the President and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges is with us today to lend his association's strong support to these

efforts. With the support of leaders in medicine, again I say, I am convinced we'll have a bipartisan consensus that will extend coverage to millions more uninsured children.

The third thing we want to do is this: Because we know the great importance of early education, we're going to expand Early Head Start enrollment by at least one-third next year. Early Head Start was created in 1994. It's been a great success in bringing the nutritional, educational and other services of Head Start to children aged three and younger and to pregnant women. It has been a real success and we need to expand it.

Today we are requesting new applications for early Head Start programs to accomplish the expansion. And to help parents to teach the very young, we developed a tool kit called, "Ready, Set, Read," part of our America Reads challenge, designed to make sure that every child can read independently by the 3rd grade. This kit gives tips on activities for young children. It's going out to early childhood programs all across the country along with a hotline number for anyone else who wants the kit.

The fourth thing we're going to do is to protect the safety of our children more. In particular, we have to help young children more who are exposed to abuse and violence. Let me tell you, as you might imagine, I get letters all the time from very young children. And my staff provides a significant number of them for me to read. The Secretary of Education not very long ago gave me a set of letters from children who were quite young, a couple of years ago gave me a set of letters from children who were in the 3rd grade. But sometimes I get them from kindergarten children and 1st grade children, talking about what they want America to look like.

And it is appalling the number of letters I get from five- and six-year-olds who simply want me to make their lives safe; who don't want to worry about being shot; who don't want anymore violence in their homes; who want their schools and the streets they walk on to be free of terror.

So, today the Department of Justice is establishing a new initiative called "Safe Start," based on efforts in New Haven, Connecticut, which you will hear about this afternoon. The program will train police officers, prosecutors, probation and parole officers in child development so that they'll actually be equipped to handle situations involving young children. And I believe if we can put this initiative into effect all across America, it will make our children safer. And I'm glad we're announcing it today during Victims of Crime Week.

We all know that it's going to take a partnership across America to help our children reach their full potential. But the toughest job will always belong to our parents -- first teachers, main nurturers. Being a parent is a joy and a challenge. But it's not a job you can walk away from, take a vacation from, or even apply for family leave from. (Laughter.) The world moves too fast, and today, parents have more worries than ever. Work does compete with family demands, and finding a balance is more difficult than before. That's why this must always be

part of the public's business.

Let me come now to the bottom line. The more we focus on early years, the more important they become. We know that these investments of time and money will yield us the highest return in healthier children, stronger families and better communities.

Now, let me say, finally, I know that none of us who are in politics, none of us who are just parents, will ever know as much as the experts we're about to hear from today. But what they're going to tell us is the most encouraging thing of all, which is, they have found out that we can all do the job. No matter how young, a child does understand a gentle touch or a smile or a loving voice. Babies understand more than we have understood about them. Now we can begin to close the gap and to make sure that all children in this country do have that chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given potential. Again, I thank you all for being here. I thank our experts, I thank the First Lady. And I'd like to ask Dr. David Hamburg to come up and sit there and take over the program.

David?

Thank you. (Applause.)

END

11:10 A.M. EDT

general - to
North Carolina
Legislature

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE JOINT SESSION OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATURE

House of Representatives Chamber
Raleigh, North Carolina

11:09 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Lt. Governor Wicker, Speaker Brubaker, Senator Basnight, the other state elected officials who are here; my good friend, Governor Hunt; Mayor Fetzer. I'd like to thank those who came down here with me today. I brought some of the members of your congressional delegation home -- they don't need to hear this speech, they've heard it before, but I was glad to have them here in moral support-- Congressman David Price; Congressman Bob Etheridge, your former superintendent of education; Congressman Mike McIntire; and Congresswoman Eva Clayton. I thank them for coming. (Applause.)

I also want to say I'm glad to be joined today by your neighbor, the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, former governor of South Carolina -- (applause) -- and by our new Secretary of Defense, Bill Cohen of Maine. We're glad to have him with us today, too. Thank you, Secretary Cohen, for coming. (Applause.)

I was glad that you mentioned my Chief of Staff, Erskine Bowles. He wouldn't come here with me today because he was afraid all of you would think that he was shirking his duties and not at work. But let me tell you, he is doing a magnificent job. I'm very proud of him. I couldn't believe it when he agreed to come back to Washington and take this job -- especially because I knew it would cost him a small fortune. And he reminded me that his father used to tell him, once you have the tools you've got to spend some time to add to the wood pile. So he's up in Washington adding back to the wood pile. And you should all be very proud of him. He is a remarkable man. He's doing a good job. (Applause.)

I'd also like to thank the other North Carolinians on my staff -- two of the three of them are here today. Doug Sosnik, my former political director and senior counselor, is not here; but my Director of Communications, Don Baer, is here; and Charles Duncan, the Associate Director of Presidential Personnel. They both came home with me and they were glad to have the excuse to come home. And I appreciate their being here and their service.

I was told that this was the first time a sitting President has addressed the North Carolina State Legislature. If it's not true don't disabuse me now, because I'm about to say something here. (Laughter.) And I am very honored to be here. Even more important, I've spent a little time here over the years and I am honored and mildly surprised that you are here, because it's tournament time and you've got four teams, as usual, in the tournament. (Applause.)

You may know that I am something of a basketball fanatic. And you may know that one of my most memorable basketball experiences -- I once saw North Carolina and Kentucky play in the Dean Dome, and the car that I came in was towed. (Laughter.) But I had so much fun at the ball game I would have walked all the way back to Arkansas after it was over. (Laughter.) I make it a point never to take sides in basketball games unless my home team in Arkansas or my alma mater, Georgetown, are playing. But I am looking forward to the day when the great Dean Smith breaks Adolf Rudd's record. (Applause.)

There is much for the rest of the nation and especially the rest of the South of to admire in North Carolina -- the determined and visionary leadership that has characterized this state for many decades in education and economic development, in bringing harmony among peoples of different backgrounds.

When I was a young man, I followed the work here of then-Governor Terry Sanford who later became my friend and colleague. Eighteen years ago, when I first started my career as Governor of Arkansas, my best mentor and friend was Jim Hunt. And he is still my mentor and friend. Dick Riley were laughing with Jim Hunt -- we were together 18 years ago as the governors of Arkansas, South Carolina and North Carolina, and we were laughing that Jim was probably the only one of us who could still get elected governor in our home states after 18 years. (Laughter.) And I applaud him on that.

It was in Chapel Hill that the cornerstone was laid at our nation's first publicly funded university, in Kitty Hawk where man first took to the skies. And today, North Carolina is an aeronautics and an air travel hub center for millions of people. Your state universities receive the highest level of funding for research and development in the nation. You have connected more of your communities than any other state in the country to the Information Superhighway -- something I'm trying to do for every classroom and library in America by the year

2000. The Research Triangle has one of the highest per capita concentrations of Ph.D.s in the world, and you are clearly one of America's most dynamic centers of economic activity.

The most important thing about all this is not for me to brag on you, you know that already, but to emphasize the main point: These things do not happen by accident. They are the product of vision and disciplined, long-term effort.

Now, our country faces the challenges of a new century -- a whole new economy, a whole new way in which people will work and live and relate to each other here at home and around the world. It is driven by information and by technology. Its best hopes may be undermined by its darkest fears, by the old demons of racial and religious and ethnic hatreds, by terrorism and narco trafficking and organized crime.

This new time that we're moving into that, coincidentally, will be part of a new century and a new millennium, will give more people in this state and this nation the chance to live out their dreams than at any period in human history if we take advantage of it to seize our opportunities and deal with our challenges.

There is unprecedented peace and prosperity now. And it has been very rare in our country's history -- you can go back and find maybe a couple of other examples when we've had real security, a feeling of prosperity, and yet, a whole lot of challenges before us. Usually when people feel secure and relatively prosperous, one of two things happens -- neither of them very laudable, but it's part of human nature -- we either get sort of happy and self-satisfied and don't do anything, or because we are not gripped by big differences, we fall out with each other over small things and petty things make us less than we ought to be.

The point I want to make today is that we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be divided among ourselves about small things. For we have been given an opportunity almost unique in American history to fashion a future that will embrace everybody. And we cannot and dare not blow that opportunity.

If you look at where we are now, you can see the vistas of the future. Our economy produced 12 million jobs in four years -- never happened before in a four-year period. We've had constant decline in crimes. We've had the biggest drop in the welfare rolls in American history in the last four years. In North Carolina, you've seen the unemployment rate drop to 4.2 percent -- 75,000 people off the welfare rolls; 350,000 new jobs. That's going on all over America. But you know that we have more to do.

I have been going around the country to the Michigan and the Maryland state legislatures -- today the Vice President is in California speaking to the state legislature as I am here with you -- because I know that to achieve the vision that we share for America we all have to do our part. I've said many times that the era of big government is over. Your federal government is now

285,000 people smaller than it was the day I took office. It's the smallest its been since President Kennedy was in office, in real terms. As a percentage of the civilian work force, the federal government is now as small as it was when Franklin Roosevelt was sworn into office the first time before the New Deal.

But the challenges we face are still very big, indeed. If they cannot be solved by government alone, and especially by the federal government, obviously, a new partnership is required. And new efforts, new activity, new responsibility is required of people at the state level, at the local level and in their private lives. The biggest challenge we face today, I believe, is the challenge of creating a world-class education system that embraces every child that lives in this state and in this nation. And this must not be a political football.

In the Cold War, because we knew that communism threatened our existence, it became commonplace that politics would stop at the water's edge. And the Democrats and the Republicans would fight like cats and dogs over whatever it was they were fighting about, but when it came to standing up to the threat of communism we were together. If the President of one party went abroad on a mission of world peace, he was never criticized back home by members of the other party because politics stopped at the water's edge.

I think we understand today intuitively that education holds the key to our future in the 21st century. And I believe politics must stop at the schoolhouse door. (Applause.)

When I was governor, a long time ago now, North Carolina already had the highest percentage of its adults in institutions of higher education of any state in the South. The economy was growing and it was diversifying, and yet you still had more success in maintaining manufacturing jobs than any state in our region, and indeed, in the country. You know all this. Last year you had the biggest increase in 8th grade math scores, I noticed, in the country. I was in Michigan and I said that they had had the second biggest increase in math scores, and the minute I got in the car Governor Hunt made sure I knew who was number one. (Laughter.) So I knew that.

The Governor chose to be sworn in at the Needham Laughton High School, his old school, to make clear that school standards and teaching excellence will be his top priorities. But with all the progress that we have made, you know we've got a lot more to do.

Between 1992 and the year 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills -- 89 percent. Today, even though over 80 percent of our children are graduating from high school, more than half -- or about half the people entering the work force are not prepared with these skills. We all know that is true.

For 20 years, inequality among working Americans grew. In the last few years it started to shrink -- in the last couple of years -- as we've gotten -- more and more of our new jobs are becoming higher-wage jobs and as growth and productivity are permitting wages to rise again.

Many people, just a couple of years ago, were saying, well, is the middle class vanishing in America, will it always be squeezed, are we going to create a country with a huge number of people that are very well off and an even much larger number of people that are poor, with a smaller middle class. We've seen in the last few years that that does not have to happen. We can begin to grow the middle class again with productivity and growth and the right kinds of new jobs, but we have to be able to provide the people with the skills to hold those jobs if we're going to maintain a high-wage, high-growth, high-opportunity society in America in the 21st century. And our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply cannot do that.

That is why our number one priority has to be to make America's education the best in the world. We have to have a nation in which every 8-year-old can read independently, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go on to college and every adult American can keep on learning throughout an entire lifetime.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a 10-point call to action for American education that describes the steps we have to meet. First, we have to make sure the all of our children come to school ready to learn. Our balanced budget will expand Head Start to a million children. But we all must do more, and a lot of that has to be done at the state level. And I hope every state in the country is looking closely at the Smart Start program in North Carolina. (Applause.)

The idea of having all elements of a community in a community nonprofit environment working on not only education, but health care and parenting skills and child care, trying to give our poorest children a coherent early childhood is terribly important. Scientists have discovered that learning begins in the earliest days of life. And now we have to explore how parents and educators can best use these findings.

On April 17th, the First Lady and I will host the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning in Washington, and I want Smart Start to be an important part of what is considered there.

Let me just give you one simple example of the scientific findings. Over half of the capacity of the brain to absorb and to learn and to grow, the capacity is developed in the first four years of life. In the first four years of life, if a child has parents who understand this and who constantly -- whether they have a Ph.D. or they were high school drop-outs -- but who constantly work at nourishing the child's learning capacities, that child will get 700,000 positive contacts.

But in the typical experience of a child with a single parent, let's say, with very little education and no self-confidence about parenting and no training and no understanding, and a sense that no difference can be made, and the child that's left in front of the television in the first four years, that child will get 150,000 positive contacts -- a more than four-to-one difference.

Now, you tell me what the future is going to be life for them. Smart Start can change that. And our cooperative efforts can change that. But we have to understand that we have totally underestimated the impact of this whole thing. And the new scientific findings impose upon all of us a heavier responsibility than we have ever had for developing the capacities of our children in their earliest years. So I look forward to that. (Applause.)

I believe we have to do more to give constructive alternatives, creative alternatives for our young children in our public schools. I favor public school choice. I've been a pioneer supporter of the charter school movement. I think that it's important to open schools that stay opened as long as they do a good job, but only as long as they do a good job. And I know that this afternoon, your State Board of Education has the opportunity to open more charter schools than any state has ever opened at one time, to foster innovation and competition and renewal. I hope the Board will take that step today, and one more time, North Carolina will be in the vanguard of a movement you can be proud of. (Applause.)

We have got to have a commitment to rebuild our schools and give our children the facilities they need to learn in. We have the largest number of children in public schools in history. The Secretary of Education never gets tired of reminding me, since I am the oldest of the baby boomers, that our generation has finally been eclipsed in numbers by the people that are in the public schools today. We also have the physical facilities in many of our schools deteriorating at a rapid rate. So, for the first time in history, I have proposed a program that will enable us at the national level to support local efforts to increase their investment in the physical facilities of the schools by making sure that the interest rates are lower and the costs are lower in the places where the need is most critical.

I'm going to Florida after I leave you, and tomorrow morning, I will be at a school where there are 17, I understand, according to my briefing -- 17 trailers for classroom space around the existing school facility in a modest-sized community in Florida. That is not an atypical experience in many of our states.

We have to meet our national goal of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000. We have to open the doors of college to all. North Carolina pioneered, with your network of four-year and two-year higher educational institutions, pioneered the idea that education ought to be a lifetime experience and that the doors ought to be open to everyone.

In the last four years, we have lowered the cost and improved the reach of the student loan program, added 200,000 slots to work-study, opened up almost 70,000 slots for college

through the national service program, AmeriCorps. We have worked very, very hard, but I think we have to do more.

It is clear to me -- if you look at the job profile, where 89 percent of the new jobs will require more than a high school education, we have to make two years of education after high school -- the 13th and 14th grades -- just as universal in America by the year 2000 as a high school diploma is today -- every bit as universal. (Applause.)

To achieve that our balanced budget plan proposes a \$1,500 HOPE Scholarship -- a tax credit that reflects the cost of the typical community college tuition in America, modeled on Governor Zell Miller's HOPE Scholarship program in Georgia. We propose to give people a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of any education after high school; an expanded IRA that you can withdraw from tax-free if the money is used to pay for higher education; and the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years, along with another 100,000 work-study slots. That will help North Carolina, and it will help America.

Finally, let me say on this subject, we know we have to make sure learning continues throughout a lifetime. We know that we have older and older students going back to community colleges, changing their careers and getting new careers and opening up new vistas. We have a federal response which I think is totally antiquated. There are at least, conservatively speaking, at least 70 different federal programs that were developed with the best of intentions to try to help to pay for various training programs for people who lose their jobs or people who are grossly underemployed.

I have proposed for four years -- with a Democratic Congress and with the Republican Congress -- getting rid of these programs and putting the money in a pot and sending a skills grant to an unemployed person or an underemployed person who has qualified for any of them, and let them go to the nearest community college or four-year college if it's the appropriate one -- whatever is nearest and best to get their education. We do not need a lot of government intermediaries here. People know -- people know what they need. They're capable of making a judgment.

In a state like North Carolina and most places in the country, nearly everybody's within driving distance of a community college that works. And that's -- I call that my G.I. Bill for America's Workers. And if you could prevail upon your legislators to support it, I would appreciate it. I've been trying for four years to pass that thing. I would appreciate it. (Applause.)

I think the most important thing we have to do is to make sure that our children have met certain national standards in basic courses. In 1989, when President Bush and the governors met at the University of Virginia, I had the honor of being the Democratic governor chosen to try to write the nation's education goals. And at the time we always assumed that out of those goals

there would come national standards and a system, a nationally recognized system of testing our children to see if they met those standards.

Well, that hasn't happened yet. And as a result, we still don't know. We don't really know whether every child in every classroom knows what he or she needs to know when he or she needs to know it in math and in basic language skills. I have challenged every state in this country to adopt high national academic standards, not just in math and language, but in other areas as well, to participate nationally by 1999 in an examination of 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math so that we can see how every child is doing in meeting those basic standards.

Now, this is, I know, somewhat controversial. There are people who have actually argued that you couldn't possibly have a national examination reflecting national standards in a country as diverse as America -- as if it's some sort of plot, as if math is different in Raleigh than Little Rock; or any board of education could rewrite the rules of algebra for Alaska as opposed to Florida. I think that is inherently implausible.

When you compete here in North Carolina for a new high-tech plant, when the Research Triangle finds some new breakthrough, you do it based on an international competition -- you have to win based on standards that are imposed. We have to be willing to hold our children to the same standards and to hold ourselves to the same standards.

Governor Hunt told me today that he will endorse our call for national standards and a testing plan. North Carolina, therefore, would be the third state to do so. The Republican governor of Michigan joined in, along with his legislative leaders, just a few days ago.

But let me say what I think we need to do. A lot of you know a lot about this. If you saw the State of the Union address you know that I introduced two students from 20 school districts in Northern Illinois who took the Third International Math and Science Survey and the 20 school districts up there tied for first in science and second in math in the survey, with Singapore for first. But if they had finished dead last I would have been equally proud of them because they were willing to actually hold themselves to international standards of achievements and measure themselves.

And this is where we need all of your help. I'm convinced that one of the reasons that we've never done this in America is that we were afraid if the news was bad we wouldn't know what to do about it. And I think that in so doing we have sold our children short. All the evidence is, all the scientific evidence is, all the anecdotal evidence is that almost all of our children, without regard to their race, their income and where they live, can learn what they need to know to compete and win in the global economy. And when we do not hold them to high standards because we are afraid that in the beginning they won't meet them, we are selling their futures down the drain and we are insulting them, because they can meet these standards.

What we have to be willing to do is to say, okay, we'll have these exams, we'll hold people to high standards; some people won't make it first; we don't want to punish people, we want to lift everybody up; but we can't know how to lift people up unless we know where we start.

When I go around the world people find it unbelievable that we have no national standard in America to tell our parents and our school leaders whether our children know what they're supposed to know in the basic skills that are necessary to learn all the other more sophisticated things we want people to know.

And I tell you, I believe in the kids of this country. I have been in schools in circumstances where it would be unthinkable that people could learn -- because of crime in the neighborhoods and because of poverty in the neighborhoods. And I have seen children performing at very high levels, meeting standards that would be acceptable in anyplace in the entire world. And I am tired of people telling me that there is some reason we shouldn't have that opportunity given to every American child. We are not protecting our children by denying them the chance to develop their God-given capacities to measure up to what they need to know and do, to do well in the future. And we ought to stop it and do better. (Applause.)

Now, on a lighter note, you may wonder why the Secretary of Defense is here with me today. (Laughter.) Before I came down here, Senator Helms asked me to tell you that he is not the guard that Jesse once said I would need to come to North Carolina. (Laughter and applause.) Ever since I got a Chief of Staff that does not speak with an accent, we've been getting along a lot better, Senator Helms and I. (Laughter.)

There is another reason that the Secretary of Defense is here today. We want to set an example -- we want to set an example, we think we ought to start the standards movements with the schools that we run at military bases. At 66 schools across our country and 167 more around the world, our Department of Defense educates 115,000 of our children every year. The Department of Defense runs a school system as big as that of the state of Delaware. And I met some of the children, some of the teachers and some of the parents out at the airport when I came in today.

Sixteen of those schools are at Camp LeJeune and Fort Bragg, right here in North Carolina, and nearly 8,000 students attend them. It's important that we give these children the best possible education, too -- especially these children, because their families sacrifice, they live far from home, they often risk their lives for their country. It's important, too, because these students come from every racial and ethnic background. They move from place to place as their parents are transferred from base to base.

Because of this mobility, no groups of students better underscores the need for common national standards and a uniform way of measuring progress than this group. If standards can work in these schools, they can work anywhere.

So I am pleased to announce today that, with the strong support of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of Defense schools have stepped forward to ask that their students be among the first to take the new tests when they become available. The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Education Riley have both committed their work.

Starting in 1999, students and classrooms, from Wiesbaden Air Force Base in Germany to Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, to Camp LeJeune will learn the same rigorous material and take the same national tests as students throughout this state, and I hope throughout our entire nation. We can make our public schools just like our military, the best on Earth, if, like our military, we are willing to adhere to high, rigorous standards for all people, regardless of their background. That's what we ought to do.

And I thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. (Applause.)

Let me also say that we know we have to do more work to prepare all of our students. And the Department of Defense is being directed today through its school system to use every resource to prepare the students for 1999 when the new math and science tests -- or math and reading tests are ready.

Let me mention one other thing that I think is very important, and it goes well with a lot of what you are doing here with your pre-school years and your early years. It is appalling to me that 40 percent of America's 8-year-olds cannot read a book on their own. But it's true. And the rest of this stuff is just sort of whistling the breeze if people can't read. So we have launched the America Reads Initiative, through the Department of Education, to mobilize an army of a million reading tutors, properly trained, to help make sure that by the year 2000 every 8-year-olds can read independently.

Thirteen North Carolina college presidents have pledged to commit a portion of their work-study students to serve as tutors, and I thank them for that. We're going to have 300,000 new work-study students over a four-year period. If we can put at least a third of them into reading instruction for our young children, we'll be a long way toward those million volunteers.

We ought to be clear about something else, too -- and here's something that I really take my hat off to Governor Hunt for. We cannot expect our children to meet high standards unless we demand that our teachers meet high standards. We have to do whatever is necessary to make sure that they do.

Last year, the report of Governor Hunt's National Commission on Teaching and America's Future laid out a blueprint for the road ahead. And all of you have together across party lines to develop a comprehensive legislative agenda that implements the report's recommendations. We have to start by recognizing and rewarding our best teachers. We all

know what a difference a good teacher can make in the life of a child. I know what a difference my teachers made in mine.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, led by Governor Hunt, has encouraged teachers all over the country to improve their skills and seek certification as master teachers. North Carolina already has more certified national teachers than any other state in the country. And the Governor was kind enough to bring five or six of them out to the airport to meet me, and they were not ashamed of the fact that they had been board-certified master teachers.

Over 20 percent of all the teachers that have been certified are here in North Carolina. That's the good news. The bad news is that only about 500 teachers have been certified. In our balanced budget plan, there's enough money to help 100,000 teachers achieve this important credential. Now, the states need to do things like North Carolina has and offer to pay -- the Governor's plan would pay master teachers another 12 percent more. You have to encourage people. But we need 100,000 at least, because what we really want is at least a board certified master teacher in every single school building in America. If you get one in every single school building in America, we know from the research that they will change the education environment and help lift the standards that other teachers achieve and help to lift the quality of teaching in all the classrooms.

So that is one of the things that we're trying to do in our budget. But again, I'd say that we are following your lead and especially the years and years and years that Governor Hunt has put into this. In April, Secretary Riley will hold a national forum on attracting and preparing teachers with 50 of our nation's best teachers and thousands of others. And we are going to have to do more to encourage our brightest young people to become teachers.

Finally, we also have to make sure, as the Governor said, that while good teachers get a raise, the truly bad teachers who can't measure up should get a pink slip. We have to do that in an expeditious and fair way. Today, that is too time consuming and costly. In some states, it can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. That same money could be and should be used to reward good teachers and to train those who are trying to improve their skills. We can change this, as they have in Cincinnati where school boards and teachers unions have worked together in partnership to find more efficient and fair ways to remove teachers who should leave the classroom. Encouraging teachers is not easy or cheap, but again, I say, we know what a phenomenal difference it makes.

Finally, to elevate teaching, I think we have to reform the way we spend money in our schools and give parents the tools to demand more accountability. Today, the Vice President is discussing that at the state legislature in Sacramento, California. His reinventing government initiative has helped us to shrink the national government to the smallest it's been in three decades and to take that money and invest it in education, invest it in technology, invest it in transportation, invest it in growing the economy and building a better future. We have to have

the same sort of national effort to analyze the way expenditures are made in public education throughout America, so that we can support those who are committed to reducing unnecessary bureaucratic expenditures and increasing expenditures on children and teachers and learning.

Yesterday I did a town hall meeting, with 35 children, on drugs. And I asked all these kids -- and some of these kids had been on drugs and were off drugs, a couple of these kids were in treatment, some of them had been in families of gang members who had been involved in drugs, and then some of them had never used drugs. It was a whole panoply of kids. But I went through child after child after child, and I asked them to tell me about their circumstances. And they all said, we need mentors, we need programs we're interested in. And one after another they kept telling me about how their school had had to abandon its music program or its art program, its physical education programs, its intramural athletic programs -- all the things that happen after school or on weekend that keep kids involved in positive things.

We have to understand that however much money we have for our schools we have to make sure we are spending it first and foremost on instruction and, secondly, on ways designed to give the children the best chance to live productive, wholesome, good, constructive lives -- and that ought to be a national effort as well.

We have found phenomenal amounts of money that we could redirect in the federal government to reducing the deficit or investing in our future simply by slowly, but deliberately, eliminating hundreds of unnecessary programs, thousands of unnecessary regulations and reducing -- without running people off -- just slowly reducing the size of government until we have got it to the point where I mentioned to you earlier.

And we have to work on that in our schools because we cannot afford to waste a single dollar when it comes to these children's future. And it is folly to believe that we're not paying for it when we take these kids away from a chance to have a full, wholesome experience and to be in those schools after school hours or before school hours and doing things in addition to their academic learning. So I hope you will support that. (Applause.)

Let me just say one final word in closing about another big job we have to do together. We have to finish the work of welfare reform. In the first four years of my presidency, we gave waivers from federal rules to 43 states to do all kinds of things to help move people from welfare to work. We now know that partly because of the growing economy, partly because of state welfare reform efforts, and partly because of a 50 percent increase in child support collections nationwide, the welfare rolls went down by 2.6 million in four years -- a record number.

Then the Congress passed and I signed the welfare reform bill, which says there will still be a national guarantee for poor children for food and medicine, but there's a limit to how long an able-bodied person can be on welfare without going to work. And we're going to give it to the states and let the states decide how to design their plans to move people from welfare to work.

Well, what I want to tell you folks is that this is like that old country singer, Chet Atkins, used to say, you've got to be awful careful what you ask for in this old life, because you might get it. And now you've got it. And here is what you have: In order to meet the demands of the law that was supported by almost every governor and every state official in the country, we must move about another million people from welfare to work. Now, keep in mind, when we reduced the welfare rolls by 2.6 million some of those were children -- only about a million of those were people moving from welfare into the work force. So we moved a million people in four years when the economy created almost 12 million jobs. We have to move another million in the next four years because of what the law says, whether the economy creates jobs or not. And it is your responsibility to design a plan to get that done.

Now, I want to help. And I have proposed federal legislation to give a tax credit of 50 percent for up to \$10,000 in salaries for people who hire people specifically off welfare. I have proposed to give extra cash to high-impact, high-unemployment areas so people can do public service work, community service work, if necessary.

But there are more things you can do. Your Work First program here in North Carolina is encouraging private employers by subsidizing paychecks and holding job fairs. These are the kinds of things we have to do everywhere. But you really need to look at how your program works. And you need to look at whether you have a system for challenging private employers to look at the incentives that are available. And you need to figure out how many people every country is going to have to move from welfare to work in order for you not to have a train wreck at the end of the next four years.

Every state has to do this. And it's going to have to be done county by county, community by community. Because I'm telling you, everybody that ever said people who are able-bodied on welfare ought to have to work now has a moral obligation to make sure that the people who have been told they have to work actually have jobs so they can work. We have to do that. (Applause.)

Let me just say -- I have been to a lot of states and looked at a lot of programs. In Missouri, they go to employers and say, we'll give you the welfare check for up to four years if you need it; but you have to pay people \$1.75 over the minimum wage and we'll give you the welfare check as an employment-in-training supplement. And you can have it for a slot, but not for a particular individual, for up to 10 years if you'll just keep being part of our program. So they've got a lot of employers -- small, medium and large -- who are part of that.

You have to do something like that to do something for the employers who are not taxed. Community nonprofits and religious organizations can hire a lot of people from welfare into their ranks, and have a lot to do with integrating their families into the mainstream of life in North Carolina. But they have to have some incentive to do so.

The second thing I would urge you to do is to make sure that as you realize savings from people moving from welfare to work, I think you can meet your goals better if you turn around and invest at least the initial of those savings back into the transition. We did a good job of adding \$4 billion to child care for people moving from welfare to work. But we still may not have enough child care to do the job. And we know that is a huge barrier. You cannot ask people to hurt their kids when they go to work. And a lot of folks entering these entry-level jobs don't make much money. Now, we can carry them over with Medicaid health insurance for their kids for a while -- they've got to have the child care.

This bill gives you a lot of flexibility and now you have to design this program. I would just implore you to really get down to brass tacks, get the facts: How many people does North Carolina have to move from welfare into jobs in four years? How many is that per county? How many is that per community? What are the tools we have? Who have we asked to do the job?

I believe that the private sector is anxious to be asked to participate in this. I believe they want to end the permanent underclass in America and help people move into the thriving, growing middle class. But we have to do it in an organized, disciplined way state by state. We're going to do our part, but we need you to do yours.

Finally, let me say that it is obvious from looking at education that we have to have a new partnership in America. Washington can lead the way, but the work has to be done by all Americans. North Carolina has led the way for a long time.

I was smiling today when I got up and I thought about coming down here, and I thought about the first time I was ever in a meeting with Governor Hunt and Governor Riley -- 18 years ago -- we were all much younger then. And we had this idea that all the southern states would reach the national average in per capita income and have all these great opportunities for our people if only we could have an education system that was as good as anyplace in the country and it would reach everybody, without regard to race or income.

And, ironically, the mission that many of us who are southerners have carried for 20 or 30 years in our hearts is now the mission of America in a global society dominated by information and technology. And it is within our reach, literally, to give every single child in America the greatest future in human history if we create the conditions in which we can flourish -- that's partly our job, through national defense and meeting the security challenges and providing a good economy -- but also having the tools.

We cannot guarantee the future for any child, but we can give every child the tools to make the most of his or her own life. That is now America's mission. It is a mission this state has pursued for a long time. If you will lead the way, America's best days are still ahead.

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

END

12:00 Noon EST

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February 4, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

United States Capitol

9:15 P.M. EST

First, a national crusade for education standards -- not federal government standards, but national standards, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the knowledge economy of the 21st century. Every state and school must shape the curriculum to reflect these standards, and train teachers to lift students up to them. To help schools meet the standards and measure their progress, we will lead an effort over the next two years to develop national tests of student achievement in reading and math.

Tonight, I issue a challenge to the nation: Every state should adopt high national standards, and by 1999, every state should test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to make sure these standards are met. (Applause.)

Raising standards will not be easy, and some of our children will not be able to meet them at first. The point is not to put our children down, but to lift them up. Good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools need to improve. They can help us to end social promotion. For no child should move from grade school to junior high, or junior high to high school until he or she is ready.

Last month, our Secretary of Education Dick Riley and I visited Northern Illinois, where 8th grade students from 20 school districts, in a project aptly called "First in the World," took the Third International Math and Science Study. That's a test that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era. And those students in Illinois tied for first in the world in science and came in second in math. Two of them, Kristin Tanner and Chris Getsla, are here tonight, along with their teacher, Sue Winski; they're up there with the First Lady. And they prove that when we aim high and challenge our students, they will be the best in the world. Let's give them a hand. Stand up, please. (Applause.)

Second, to have the best schools, we must have the best

teachers. Most of us in this chamber would not be here tonight without the help of those teachers. I know that I wouldn't be here. For years, many of our educators, led by North Carolina's Governor Jim Hunt and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, have worked very hard to establish nationally accepted credentials for excellence in teaching. Just 500 of these teachers have been certified since 1995. My budget will enable 100,000 more to seek national certification as master teachers. We should reward and recognize our best teachers. (Applause.) And as we reward them, we should quickly and fairly remove those few who don't measure up, and we should challenge more of our finest young people to consider teaching as a career.

Third, we must do more to help all our children read. Forty percent -- forty percent -- of our 8-year-olds cannot read on their own. That's why we have just launched the America Reads initiative -- to build a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors to make sure every child can read independently by the end of the 3rd grade. We will use thousands of AmeriCorps volunteers to mobilize this citizen army. We want at least 100,000 college students to help. And tonight I am pleased that 60 college presidents have answered my call, pledging that thousands of their work-study students will serve for one year as reading tutors. (Applause.)

This is also a challenge to every teacher and every principal. You must use these tutors to help students read. And it is especially a challenge to our parents. You must read with your children every night.

This leads to the fourth principle: Learning begins in the first days of life. Scientists are now discovering how young children develop emotionally and intellectually from their very first days, and how important it is for parents to begin immediately talking, singing, even reading to their infants. The First Lady has spent years writing about this issue, studying it. And she and I are going to convene a White House Conference on Early Learning and the Brain this spring, to explore how parents and educators can best use these startling new findings.

We already know we should start teaching children before they start school. That's why this balanced budget expands Head Start to one million children by 2002. (Applause.) And that is why the Vice President and Mrs. Gore will host their annual family conference this June on what we can do to make sure that parents are an active part of their children's learning all the way through school.

They've done a great deal to highlight the importance of family in our life, and now they're turning their attention to getting more parents involved in their children's learning all the way through school. And I thank you, Mr. Vice President, and I thank you especially, Tipper, for what you do. (Applause.)

Fifth, every state should give parents the power to choose the right public school for their children. Their right to choose will foster competition and innovation that can make public schools better. We should also make it possible for more parents and teachers to start charter schools, schools that set and meet the highest standards, and exist only as long as they do. Our plan will help America to create 3,000 of these charter schools by the next century -- nearly seven times as there are in the country today -- so that parents will have even more choices in sending their children to the best schools.

Sixth: Character education must be taught in our schools. We must teach our children to be good citizens. (Applause.) And we must continue to promote order and discipline, supporting communities that introduce school uniforms, impose curfews, enforce truancy laws, remove disruptive students from the classroom, and have zero tolerance for guns and drugs in school. (Applause.)

Seventh: We cannot expect our children to raise themselves up in schools that are literally falling down. With the student population at an all-time high, and record numbers of school buildings falling into disrepair, this has now become a serious national concern. Therefore, my budget includes a new initiative --\$5 billion to help communities finance \$20 billion in school construction over the next four years. (Applause.)

Eighth: We must make the 13th and 14th years of education -- at least two years of college -- just as universal in America by the 21st century as a high school education is today, and we must open the doors of college to Americans. (Applause.)

To do that, I propose America's HOPE Scholarship, based on Georgia's pioneering program: two years of a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, enough to pay for the typical community college. I also propose a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school; an expanded IRA you can withdraw from tax free for education; and the largest increase in Pell Grant scholarships in 20 years. (Applause.) Now, this plan will give most

families the ability to pay no taxes on money they save for college tuition. I ask you to pass it -- and give every American who works hard the chance to go to college.

Ninth: In the 21st century, we must expand the frontiers of learning across a lifetime. All our people, of whatever age, must have a chance to learn new skills. Most Americans live near a community college. The roads that take them there can be paths to a better future. My G.I. Bill for America's Workers will transform the confusing tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant to go directly into eligible workers' hands. For too long, this bill has been sitting on that desk there without action -- I ask you to pass it now. Let's give more of our workers the ability to learn and to earn for a lifetime. (Applause.)

Tenth: We must bring the power of the Information Age into all our schools. Last year, I challenged America to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000, so that, for the first time in our history, children in the most isolated rural towns, the most comfortable suburbs, the poorest inner city schools, will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge. (Applause.) That is my plan -- a Call to Action for American Education. Some may say that it is unusual for a President to pay this kind of attention to education. Some may say it is simply because the President and his wonderful wife have been obsessed with this subject for more years than they can recall. That is not what is driving these proposals.

We must understand the significance of this endeavor: One of the greatest sources of our strength throughout the Cold War was a bipartisan foreign policy; because our future was at stake, politics stopped at the water's edge. Now I ask you -- and I ask all our nation's governors; I ask parents, teachers, and citizens all across America -- for a new nonpartisan commitment to education -- because education is a critical national security issue for our future, and politics must stop at the schoolhouse door. (Applause.)

To prepare America for the 21st century we must harness the powerful forces of science and technology to benefit all Americans. This is the first State of the Union carried live in video over the Internet. But we've only begun to spread the benefits of a technology revolution that should become the modern birthright of every citizen.

Our effort to connect every classroom is just the

beginning. Now, we should connect every hospital to the Internet, so that doctors can instantly share data about their patients with the best specialists in the field. And I challenge the private sector tonight to start by connecting every children's hospital as soon as possible, so that a child in bed can stay in touch with school, family and friends. A sick child need no longer be a child alone. (Applause.)

We must build the second generation of the Internet so that our leading universities and national laboratories can communicate in speeds 1,000 times faster than today, to develop new medical treatments, new sources of energy, new ways of working together.

But we cannot stop there. As the Internet becomes our new town square, a computer in every home -- a teacher of all subjects, a connection to all cultures -- this will no longer be a dream, but a necessity. And over the next decade, that must be our goal. (Applause.)

We must continue to explore the heavens -- pressing on with the Mars probes and the international space station, both of which will have practical applications for our everyday living.

June 14, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SAN DIEGO COMMENCEMENT

Rimac Field
University of California at San Diego
San Diego, California

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First, we must continue to expand opportunity. Full participation in our strong and growing economy is the best antidote to envy, despair and racism. We must press forward to move millions more from poverty and welfare to work; to bring the spark of enterprise to inner cities; to redouble our efforts to reach those rural communities prosperity has passed by. And most important of all, we simply must give our young people the finest education in the world.

There are no children who, because of their ethnic or racial background, who cannot meet the highest academic standards if we set them and measure our students against them, if we give them well-trained teachers and well-equipped classrooms, and if we continue to support reasoned reforms to achieve excellence, like the charter school movement. (Applause.)

At a time when college education means stability, a good job, a passport to the middle class, we must open the doors of college to all Americans and we must make at least two years of college as universal at the dawn of the next century as a high school diploma is today.

In our efforts to extend economic and educational opportunity to all our citizens, we must consider the role of affirmative action. I know affirmative action has not been perfect in America -- that's why two years ago we began an effort to fix the things that are wrong with it -- but when used in the right way, it has worked. (Applause.)

It has given us a whole generation of professionals in fields that used to be exclusive clubs -- where people like me got the benefit of 100 percent affirmative action. There are now more

women-owned businesses than ever before. There are more African American, Latino and Asian American lawyers and judges, scientists and engineers, accountants and executives than ever before.

But the best example of successful affirmative action is our military. Our armed forces are diverse from top to bottom -- perhaps the most integrated institution in our society and certainly the most integrated military in the world. And, more important, no one questions that they are the best in the world. So much for the argument that excellence and diversity do not go hand in hand. (Applause.)

There are those who argue that scores on standardized tests should be the sole measure of qualification for admissions to colleges and universities. But many would not apply the same standard to the children of alumni or those with athletic ability. (Applause.)

I believe a student body that reflects the excellence and the diversity of the people we will live and work with has independent educational value. Look around this crowd today. Don't you think you have learned a lot more than you would have if everybody sitting around you looked just like you? I think you have. (Applause.)

And beyond the educational value to you, it has a public interest because you will learn to live and work in the world you will live in better. When young people sit side by side with people of many different backgrounds, they do learn something that they can take out into the world. And they will be more effective citizens.

Many affirmative action students excel. They work hard, they achieve, they go out and serve the communities that need them for their expertise and role model. If you close the door on them, we will weaken our greatest universities and it will be more difficult to build the society we need in the 21st century. (Applause.)

Let me say, I know that the people of California voted to repeal affirmative action without any ill motive. The vast majority of them simply did it with a conviction that discrimination and isolation are no longer barriers to achievement. But consider the results. Minority enrollments in law school and other graduate programs are plummeting for the first time in decades. Assuming the same will likely happen in undergraduate education. We must not re-segregate higher education or leave it to the private universities

to do the public's work. (Applause.)

At the very time when we need to do a better job of living and learning together, we should not stop trying to equalize economic opportunity. To those who oppose affirmative action, I ask you to come up with an alternative. I would embrace it if I could find a better way. And to those of us who still support it, I say we should continue to stand for it, we should reach out to those who disagree or are uncertain and talk about the practical impact of these issues, and we should never be thought unwilling to work with those who disagree with us to find new ways to lift people up and bring people together. (Applause.)

Beyond opportunity, we must demand responsibility from every American. Our strength as a society depends upon both -- upon people taking responsibility for themselves and their families, teaching their children good values, working hard and obeying the law, and giving back to those around us. The new economy offers fewer guarantees, more risks, and more rewards. It calls upon all of us to take even greater responsibility for our education than ever before.

1998

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS
BY THE PRESIDENT

Hall of the House
United States Capitol

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

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

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

1998 state of the
Union excerpt

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

technology
learning grants

For Immediate Release
October 10th, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY LEARNING GRANTS

The Roosevelt Room

9:28 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for your outstanding work on this issue. And thank you, Secretary Riley and Secretary Brown, for your work as well.

I want to say a few more things about the people behind me and those in front of me, but if I might, in the beginning, I think it would be appropriate for me to make a few comments about what has happened to the Amtrak train in Arizona.

We believe it was a case of sabotage. And I am profoundly outraged by it. I want to make it clear that we will do everything we can with the federal government to catch whoever is responsible. I am determined that we will make sure that in the United States we will have the tools, the means we need to keep the American people safe. We will get to the bottom of this. We will punish those who are responsible. We will not tolerate acts of cowardice like this in the United States, regardless of the motive.

And when I know more about it, I'll be glad to comment more about it.

I have just finished a meeting, along with the Vice President and other members of our administration, with leaders who are here behind me, leaders of many of the American companies on the cutting edge of the Information Age. They are helping to lead our nation into the world of the 21st century as the strongest economic power in the world.

Two and a half weeks ago in California, I met with some other business leaders, and I called on the representatives of business, government, teachers, schools, parents, students, to become involved in a high-tech venture with a guaranteed return. I asked for a national public-private partnership to connect every classroom in America to the information superhighway by the year 2000.

This today, this meeting, is the next step. Today these business and education leaders have joined with me to launch a partnership that will ensure that every child in America is technologically literate for the dawn of the 21st century, and that every child in America has the resources, the means, by which to become technologically literate by the dawn of the 21st century.

The idea that every child deserves the opportunity to build a bright future has been at the heart of America's education system and America's entire value system. Education is the way we keep the promise of the American Dream to all of our children without regard to their circumstances.

Today, that means computers, knowing how to make the most of them, having teachers who can work with students to make the most of them, and having the right software to make the computers make sense.

Technological literacy must become the standard in our country. Preparing children for a lifetime of computer use is just as essential today as teaching them the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic.

This isn't just computers for computers' sake. We're going to work together to help our schools use

technology to revolutionize American education so that all children will be able to learn better and teachers will be able to be more effective.

In the next few months, the leaders here behind me will be working with us to produce a plan based on the four pillars I outlined in California: modern computers in every classroom, accessible to every student from kindergarten through the 12th grade; connections from every classroom to the incredible educational resources flowing throughout the world; teachers in every classroom who are trained to make the most of new technology to educate every student. And I want to emphasize one of the most important aspects of the technological revolution is the opportunities being opened to children so many Americans had given up on and schools that too many Americans had given up on. And finally, a rich array of educational software and information resources.

Today, I'm announcing three steps forward that show we are turning these principles into reality. First, we're awarding Technology Learning Challenge Grants to 19 communities. In each community there's a partnership of educators, businesses, libraries, museums and community groups that have come together to retool their schools for the 21st century. They are matching these grants. They are committing hardware and software, hard work, and know-how. For example, in Dover, Delaware, Bell Atlantic, Lightspan Partnership and the State Education Department are linking homes and schools through family tv sets to improve reading and arithmetic in the early grades. This is how these partnerships will work.

Let me say that it costs a very modest amount of money. This is one of the discussions we have to have in the weeks ahead as we continue our progress toward a balanced budget. We can balance the budget without cutting back on our commitment to our educational future. For a very small amount of national money, we are leveraging much larger amounts of local resources. And I would say again, this is the kind of thing that the nation ought to be doing now in the area of education and the sort of thing I will be trying to preserve as we negotiate the shelves of the budget discussions.

The second thing I want to announce is a private sector effort making a difference in one state is now going nationwide. We must rely on the expertise of millions of Americans working in the high-tech professions. The Technology Corps brings private sector volunteers into our schools so that they can bring technology into our classrooms. It's already working in Massachusetts where it was started by Gary Beach, who is here with us today, to connect Massachusetts schools. And now we want to do this around the country.

Finally, we're launching the American Technology Honor Society to harness the high-tech skills of exceptional students so they can help to expand their own school's use of technology. We have to remember that people born in the Information Age are more comfortable with it than people like me, who weren't. (Laughter.)

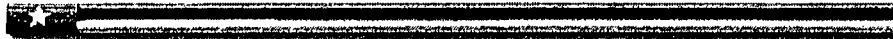
The American Technology Honor Society will be rooted in the National Honor Society, and it will be run by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Communities, businesses and governments; parents, teachers and students -- this could be the largest merger in history, with no questions from the Justice Department. (Laughter.) Certainly it will be the most important partnership for the future in the United States today, working together to put a computer in every classroom, and a computer whiz at every desk.

Every child in America deserves the chance to get the high-tech know-how to unlock the promises of the 21st century. Every child in America. And thanks to the statesmanship and vision of the people who are here with me today and many like them all around America, we are going to forge a partnership to do just that.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

9:35 A.M. EDT



Statements
on Educational
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