

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Little Rock, Arkansas)

For Immediate Release

April 1, 1995

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

Gibbs Magnet School
Little Rock, Arkansas

general-
radio address

9:06 A.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. I'm speaking to you this morning from the Gibbs Magnet School for International Studies in Little Rock, Arkansas. I'm happy to be joined by the Principal, Dr. Majorie Bassa, members of her staff, and 30 wonderful elementary students, their parents, and other interested citizens here.

Good morning, class.

CLASS: Good morning, Mr. President

THE PRESIDENT: What you just heard was the sound of America's future. This school and these people are living proof that the education reforms that were started when I was Governor of Arkansas, and that are continuing now under the leadership of Governor Tucker, are paying off.

The young people who attend this public school are getting a headstart on the 21st century. Beginning in kindergarten, they learn about other cultures, they receive foreign language training. They're already acquiring the skills that will allow them one day to compete and win in the new global economy. They come from many different racial and cultural backgrounds, but they all have a shot at the American Dream.

I want to spend a few moments telling you why I think education and training for all of our people is the most important thing we can do to keep the American Dream alive in the 21st century.

You know Washington's in the midst of a great debate today about the proper role of our national government. On one side is the old view that big, one-size-fits-all government can provide the answers to all of our big problems. On the other side is the view that government is the source of all of our problems. In the real world, that's a false choice.

Let's look at what started this debate. As we move toward the 21st century and the information age, jobs and incomes will depend more and more on what we know and what we can learn. That means that today, at the end of the Cold War, we're able to create jobs, new businesses, new millionaires at a rapid rate, more than ever before. But at the same time, about two-thirds of our people are working hard for the same or lower wages, and are quite insecure about their future. And we know we still have too many social problems we're not making enough headway on -- crime and drugs, violence and family breakdown.

In the real world, we have to face the fact that we have to create opportunity but deal with these problems of economic stagnation and social disintegration. And we are stuck with a government that's too organized to meet the problems of yesterday and not enough able to meet

the problems of today and tomorrow.

I believe we have to chart a new course between the old way of big government and the new rage of no government, because I believe we need a government that does four things: First, that creates economic opportunity -- grow the middle class and shrink the under class. Second, that enhances the security of the American people, here at home, on our streets, in our schools, and abroad. And third, that reforms the national government to make it smaller, less bureaucratic, to serve the interests of ordinary Americans, not special interests, to serve the future, not the past, and to demand more personal responsibility of our citizens.

Fourth, and most important, we need a government that helps our people raise their education and skill levels so they can make the most of their own lives. That's what I call the "New Covenant," a partnership between Americans and their government that offers more opportunity in return for more responsibility.

Earlier this week, I convened a regional economic conference at Emory University in Atlanta with a group of economists, business and government leaders. And working Americans discussed ways to strengthen our economy and to ensure a better future for our children. They were Republicans, Democrats and Independents. But the one thing we all agreed on was that the countries that will do the best job of developing the full capacities of all of their children and all of their adults will be the most successful in the 21st century. We all agree that higher education levels are essential if we're going to raise the incomes of working Americans, if we're going to grow the middle class and shrink the under class.

That's why I and my administration have worked so hard to expand Head Start, to set world class standards for our schools, to give parents and teachers more resources to meet those standards, but also to give them more authority at the school level to decide how best to achieve excellence. We've worked to establish apprenticeship programs to prepare young people who don't go on to college to get higher paying jobs. And we've worked hard to make college loans more affordable for more students, millions of them throughout the country.

By eliminating the middlemen in the college loan system, lowering the cost, and offering better repayment terms, our direct student loan program is giving more young people a chance to go to college while saving tax dollars at the same time. And we're demanding more responsibility in return. More students get loans at lower cost, but now they have to pay them back. Stricter enforcement of the student loan program has cut the cost of delinquent loans to taxpayers from \$2.8 billion in 1991 to a billion dollars today. That's opportunity and responsibility.

Because we've focused on education, for the last two years we've been able to cut government spending, cut the deficit, cut hundreds of programs and over 100,000 bureaucrats from the federal budget, and still increase our investment in education.

Now, many in Congress think there's no difference in education and other spending. For example, there are proposals to reduce funding for Head Start; for public school efforts to meet the national education goals; for our national service program, AmeriCorps, which provides scholarship money for young people who will work at minimum wage jobs in local community service projects; even proposals to reduce school lunch funding.

There are proposals to eliminate our efforts for safe and drug-free schools altogether, and unbelievably to cut the college loan programs.

These are not wise proposals. Here at Gibbs, where students are preparing for the 21st century, close to 50 percent of the students depend upon the school lunch program for a nutritious meal. And all these young people, not just those who have the money to afford it, should be able to go as far as their talents will carry them. And if that means they need scholarships, student loans and the opportunity to do community service, we ought to give it to them.

Some in Congress want to cut education to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. I want instead a middle class tax cut that helps families pay for education and training, a tax deduction for education costs after high school.

Now, in the past education and training have enjoyed broad, bipartisan support. Last year with strong support from Republicans and Democrats, Congress enacted my proposals to help students and schools meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Educational experts said we did more for education by expanding Head Start, expanding apprenticeships, expanding college loans than any session of Congress in 30 years.

Now in this new Congress, some want to cut education. And that's wrong. Gibbs Magnet School is a reflection of what we ought to be doing more of in America. I don't know what political party these children belong to, but I do know we need them all, and they deserve our best efforts to give them a shot at the American Dream. We must begin when they're young, training our people to succeed, preparing them for a lifetime of learning. The fight for education is the fight for the American Dream.

Thanks again to all those people who are here with me today, especially our children. And thanks for listening.

END

9:12 A.M. CST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 25, 1995

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

*general - radio
address*

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. This morning I want to talk about how much we can accomplish when we work in a spirit of cooperation. Once again this week demonstrated that Democrats and Republicans can come together to break gridlock when they put the American people first.

Our mission here is to keep the American Dream alive for all our people; to grow the middle class and shrink the underclass; to promote the mainstream values of work and family, community, and looking out for the future of our children; to reform government to meet the challenges we face. There's a great debate here about how to change government. On one side is the old view that big, one-size-fits-all government can fix all our big problems. On the other is the view that government is the source of all our problems. In the real world that's a false choice.

We must go beyond the old way of big government and the new rage of no government to the idea of government as a partner -- a partner that works to expand opportunity while shrinking bureaucracy; to empower people to make the most of their own lives through education and training; and to enhance our security on our streets and around the world. That's what I believe. And I believe most Americans feel that way to.

In short, I believe that federal government must be a savior -- or cannot be a savior, but must not sit on the sidelines. For our future we need a government that helps us to create more opportunity, but demands more responsibility from all our citizens. That's what I mean by the New Covenant -- opportunity and responsibility.

Despite real differences between Republicans and Democrats, we see progress on three proposals I have supported for many years -- proposals that I advocated when I ran for President. All of them impose more responsibility on the federal government. And it's high time.

First, Congress passed a bill, which I was proud to sign, requiring Congress to live by the laws it imposes on the private sector. Second, last week in the Rose Garden right outside the Oval Office where I'm speaking now, I was pleased to sign another bill which for the first time limits the ability of Congress to pass laws which impose unfunded mandates on state and local governments. As a former governor, I know this bill will make a big difference in the ability of state and local governments to improve the lives of our people without having Washington tell them how to spend the tax dollars you send them.

Third, last week the Senate passed a line-item veto. I have favored this power for presidents, no matter what their party, for a long time. It will bring more discipline to our spending process by enabling presidents to veto particular projects which are unjustified,

but which today can be hidden in comprehensive bills the president has to sign. Now that the line-item veto in some version has passed both Houses of Congress, I urge members from both parties to resolve their differences, pass a unified bill and send it to me. Then the line-item veto can put our people ahead of pork.

Last week, we saw some progress on another crucial issue -- welfare reform. We saw that we can find common ground, but we are not all the way there yet. In my radio address last week, I talked about the need to have tougher child support enforcement, to demand that parents take responsibility for their own children and not let parents off the hook or make the taxpayers pick up the tab for their neglect. If all the child support in America that is owed was paid, we could move 800,000 families off the welfare roll.

I'm pleased that members of the House in both parties responded to my position on tougher child support enforcement. They voted by 426 to 5 to adopt a provision from my welfare reform bill that calls upon states to deny driver's licenses and professional licenses to deadbeat parents -- people who owe child support and can pay it, but don't. The House has now adopted every major child support element in my welfare reform bill. If the Senate will follow suit, we'll mount the toughest crackdown on deadbeat parents ever and will help more children, too.

But we have to do more to promote responsible parenting. Other provisions of the House bill would actually make it harder for many people to get off and stay off welfare. And the bill doesn't really do anything to promote work; indeed, it removes any real responsibility for states to help people gain the training and skills they need to get and keep jobs. It even cuts child care for working people struggling to hold down jobs and stay off welfare.

I commend the Democrats in the House for voting unanimously for an alternative bill sponsored by Congressman Nathan Deal of Georgia because it was tougher on work requirements, better for children, and did more to promote responsible parenting. I'm looking forward to working with Republicans and Democrats to really end welfare as we know it, making sure people earn a paycheck, not a welfare check; that they move from dependence to independence.

I also want to caution the members of the House to try to tone down the rhetoric. It got a little rough last week and a little too personal and partisan. After all, all Americans want to change the welfare system; no American wants to continue a system that doesn't promote work and responsible parenting.

In everything we do we must be working to expand the middle class, to shrink the underclass, and to promote these values of family and work, community and looking out for the future of our kids. I hope we'll be back in the Rose Garden while it's still spring to sign even more bills into law that help us to do those things. Guided by the values that have always kept us strong, we can work together to help all our people earn a fair shot at the American Dream.

Thanks for listening.

END10:11 A.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 11, 1995

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

*general-radio
address*

Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. I ran for President to keep the American Dream alive for the forgotten middle class and for all of those struggling to make it in our country, to make sure all Americans have the chance to live up to their God-given potential. Today in Washington, there's a great debate about how best to do that. And the choices we make will say a lot about who we are as a nation as we enter the new century.

On one side, there's the old one-size-fits-all Washington view that big government can fix every problem. On the other, there's the Republican contract view that the federal government is the cause of every problem. Well, I have a different view. I believe the purpose of government is to expand opportunity, not bureaucracy, to empower people through education to make the most of their own lives, and to enhance our security on our streets and around the world. I believe in a government that is limited, but effective, lean but not mean -- not a savior, but not on the sidelines, a partner in the fight for the future.

I believe in a government that promotes opportunity, but demands responsibility and that understands that we need all Americans in strong grass roots communities. That's what the New Covenant is all about -- opportunity and responsibility.

Let me give you two examples. First, with regard to welfare reform, I believe we should offer more opportunity in terms of education and work to people on welfare, but we must demand more responsibility -- tougher child support enforcement, responsible parenting and the requirement that to receive benefits, young people should be in school or working toward going to work.

Or, take the college loan program. Our administration believes more people should go to college, so we've offered more opportunity to millions of young people; more affordable college loans with much better repayment terms. But we've insisted on more responsibility. The cost to you, the taxpayers, of delinquent college loans has gone down from \$2.8 billion a year to \$1 billion a year since I took office. Opportunity and responsibility.

Look at the economy. When I took office, we had no economic strategy for putting people first. Instead, we'd had 12 years in which trickle-down economics had quadrupled the deficit and investments in our people had been ignored. There was less opportunity and less responsibility. Today, we're reducing the deficit by over \$600 billion. The federal work force is down by over 150,000 and will soon be the smallest since John Kennedy was President. We cut 300 programs in our first two budgets, and this year, we want to eliminate or combine 400 more. But while we've cut, we're also helping people to invest in their future -- more for Head Start, to apprenticeships, to college loans, to training for adults. The results are clear: This strategy is working.

We have the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation in 25 years. Since I became President, we have 6.1 million more jobs. Now, there's more to do. More people want work, and too many people haven't gotten a raise and are living with economic uncertainty. We've got to keep cutting unnecessary spending and investing in growing our economy.

The old view resisted change, but the Republican contract view often goes too far. Let me give you another example. We want to save money and to change the Agriculture Department, and so do the Republicans. The old view just left the Agriculture Department alone, though agriculture has changed greatly.

My approach was to close 1200 offices and to shrink the bureaucracy. But the Republicans want to cut the School Lunch Program that's helped our children thrive for 50 years. You'll see this debate played out in many areas. One involves AmeriCorps, our national service program. AmeriCorps is about opportunity and responsibility. You get a helping hand for your own education if you give one to your country. Our young AmeriCorps volunteers are partners with our communities, with nurses, pastors, police officers -- doing work that won't get done any other way. They're walking police beats in Brooklyn, building homes in Georgia, fighting fires in Idaho.

Jamie Kendrick is one of these young people. He's here with me, along with some other AmeriCorps volunteers today. He works with disadvantaged children in Baltimore. And as he does, he's helping them to help others. Every week, he leads more than 90 troubled kids into a nursing home to visit older people. The seniors get companionship and a chance to share their wisdom. The children, many of whom come from broken homes, now know older people who care about them. And Jamie knows he's serving others as he earns tuition for college. This is a good deal for Jamie, for the seniors, for the young people -- and for us, too. We get better citizens, stronger communities and more education.

I want to keep AmeriCorps growing. Right now, Republicans in the House of Representatives are proposing to cut off opportunities in AmeriCorps for 15,000 people like Jamie. Then they want to end AmeriCorps altogether. But AmeriCorps isn't a bureaucracy, it's a grass roots partnership to build communities through opportunity and responsibility.

The House Republicans want to cut all this and more, including the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, the Summer Jobs Program to pay for huge tax cuts costing \$700 billion over ten years and benefitting mostly upper-income Americans. AmeriCorps, the School Lunch Program, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs -- all together, they cost a tiny fraction of that.

Now, I believe we must keep cutting spending and we should give middle-class Americans tax relief to help pay for their education, their child rearing, their health care costs. But this proposal goes too far. The path to the future is through opportunity and responsibility.

Before I close, I want to emphasize that in spite of these differences, I think we can make real progress now. We don't have to give in to gridlock. I've already signed a bill to apply to Congress the laws it applies to private business, and we're about to complete a bill to limit the ability of Congress to pass mandates on the state and local government without paying for them.

There's more we can do to cut pork -- not people -- in the

federal budget. We're about to begin debate in the Senate on the line-item veto -- an issue on which the Republican leaders and I strongly agree. We need to pass it and keep cutting unnecessary spending.

This can be a very good time for our country if we all remember our mission: to make life easier, not harder, for middle-income families, to grow the middle class and shrink the underclass, to make the future brighter, not darker, for our young people, to promote opportunity and responsibility.

We must keep faith with the American Dream. The Jamie Kendricks of our country will do right by all of us if we will do right by them.

Thanks for listening.

END10:14 A.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 17, 1994

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

Northern Virginia Community College
Annandale, Virginia

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. Today I'm speaking from the Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia where I'm joined by 50 students and the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, who will speak with you in a moment.

In this holiday season, families come together to reflect on the past year and plan for the year ahead. It's a time to be with our children and think about their futures. For students near the end of high school, it's a time to think about continuing their education after graduation.

Our people face greater challenges than ever to get ahead. For too long, too many Americans have worked harder for less. I ran for President to change that, to help ordinary people compete and win in the new American economy, to restore the American Dream for middle class families.

For two years, we've pursued an economic strategy that has helped to produce over five million new jobs. But this growth has not produced higher incomes for most Americans, especially those without more than a high school education. At the very time, it's more important than ever to get a good education after high school, and then to keep learning throughout adult life. It's more expensive than ever before.

In the decade before I took office, the cost of college tripled. Too many people are being priced out of a fair shot at high quality education. If we can't change that, we're at risk of losing our great American middle class, and of becoming a two-tiered society with a few successful people at the top and everyone else struggling below.

Fifty years ago, an American President proposed the G.I. Bill of Rights. It helped World War II veterans go to college, buy a home, raise their children; it built this country.

Last Thursday night, I proposed a Middle Class Bill of Rights, Four new ideas to help middle class Americans get ahead. Here's how it will work.

The first proposal is especially important to people at this community college. If your family makes less than \$120,000, the tuition you pay for college, community college, graduate school, professional school, vocational education or worker training, will be fully deductible from your taxable income, phased up to \$10,000 a year. Nothing like this has ever been done before.

Second, if your family makes \$75,000 a year or less, you'll receive a tax cut phased up to \$500 for every child under the age of 13.

Third, if your family makes less than \$100,000 a year, you'll be able to put \$2,000 a year, tax-free, into an individual retirement account, but you'll also be able to withdraw the money, tax-free, for education, a first home, or the care of an elderly parent.

Finally, the Middle Class Bill of Rights will take the billions of dollars that government spends on job training, and make that money directly available to American workers so that you can spend it as you decide, when you need to learn new skills to get a new job or a better job.

Of course, we have to pay for all this. On Thursday night, I proposed dramatic reductions in three more Cabinet departments. And Monday morning, Vice President Gore and I will outline these cuts in more detail.

But today, I want to ask Secretary Riley to talk about why education is a top priority in the Middle Class Bill of Rights.

Secretary Riley.

SECRETARY RILEY: Thank you so much. Mr. President, you have pursued the most far-reaching education agenda of any President in a generation. This administration, with strong bipartisan support in Congress, has made college loans more affordable, set challenging standards for our nation's schools, enabled more students to get on-the-job training while in high school, and worked very hard to get parents involved in their children's education all across America.

And now, the Middle Class Bill of Rights goes even further. These bold ideas will help families gain control over their future, reap the benefits that go along with learning. And it will help them gain the optimism and fortitude necessary to build better lives and better futures for themselves. I urge all my fellow parents and grandparents to sit down with your families this weekend and talk about the Middle Class Bill of Rights. Talk with your children. Think about your future. Think about theirs.

We need to invest in our future. And that future is our children. And the President's proposals take us forward toward that goal.

Now, I'll turn it back to you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Secretary Riley. My fellow Americans, this Middle Class Bill of Rights will further the agenda of this administration and, more importantly, our common mission as Americans -- to expand middle class incomes and opportunities, to promote the values of work and family, responsibility and community. And to help Americans compete and win in the new American economy of the future.

With all the challenges we face today, ours is still the greatest country in the world. Let's keep it that way for our children and for future generations. I thank Secretary Riley for joining me, and wish you all a very happy holiday season.

Thanks for listening.

END

10:12 A.M. EST

general - radio
address

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 22, 1994

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

Good morning. As the autumn leaves begin to reach the height of their color, students all across our country are hard at work, preparing for math tests and spelling bees, history papers and midterm exams. Their knowledge and skills are being tested; their report cards will be a measure of their success.

Well, just like those students, America is also being tested. We're facing difficult questions about how we should guide our children in today's world and whether we'll prepare them for the challenges they'll meet. It's not an easy test; perhaps one of the most difficult we have ever undertaken. But the right answers are before us, and our children will be the measure of our success. We found a number of right answers already. Our national report card shows some exciting progress.

When I became President I knew the only way we could continue to lead the world would be if we developed the learning capacities of as many of our citizens as possible. That's why the progress we've made on our lifelong learning agenda is so vital to the longterm strength of the United States.

In all our education proposals we've tried to make a fundamental change in the way the federal government helps students to meet their goals. Instead of prescribing detailed rules and regulations that schools have to follow, as the federal government has done in the past, we've tried to show that it's the responsibility of individual teachers and students and communities -- with the help of our national government -- to work hard and to make good lives for themselves.

In everything from an expanded Head Start program to new youth apprenticeships for young people who don't go to college we've worked to build on those principles. In our Goals 2000 law, which I signed last spring, we set tough world-class standards in the basic subjects for students and schools, but we made it clear that students and teachers at the school level have to decide how to meet those standards. We made it clear that we have to keep guns and drugs out of our schools; that we have to encourage our parents to stay involved with our children's education.

Now, this past week I had the opportunity to sign into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That bill says that, while the national government will set the standards and help to develop the measurements of whether schools are meeting them, it is fundamentally the responsibility of people at the grass roots to make sure those standards are met.

We are encouraging what we know is the true magic of education -- that which occurs between teacher and student, with the help of parents and principals and communities.

This new law does another thing. It supports programs that teach our young people that character does count; that helps them to learn the difference between right and wrong, based on standards based in our local communities. We also have to work to make sure more Americans

have the higher education they need to compete and win in the global economy.

One of the biggest obstacles has been soaring college costs and an inadequate national system of college loans. We started two new programs to help fix those problems. Our national service program, AmeriCorps, is already giving 20,000 people the chance to serve their country and earn money for higher education. Within three years, 100,000 people will be participating in this domestic Peace Corps. To give you some idea of how many that is, the largest number of young people who ever participated in the Peace Corps in a single year was 16,000.

Over and above the national service program, this week I announced that Americans will be able to open what we call Individual Education Accounts. We already have individual retirement accounts that help people direct the growth of their own retirement benefits, and now all Americans will be able to have individual education accounts, so that they can pay back college loans over time in ways that meet their own needs and the requirements of their own working lives.

This program will save the government money, reduce defaults, lower fees for everyone. With these reforms we're helping to make sure that America can embrace the challenges we face in the world economy as we look to the next century.

But you should know that there are those who would take us in a very different direction -- back to the policies of the past which have failed. Our political opponents have signed what they call a contract that tells us what they would do if they control Congress. They'd give a \$200-billion tax cut to the wealthiest Americans. They would explode the deficit. That would mean cutting many of the education reforms we've worked so hard to pass, along with Medicare and other programs. Our opponents have even made a specific proposal to cut college aid for 3 million American student borrowers each year to pay for their trillion-dollar package of promises in tax cuts, defense spending and increases, revitalization of Star Wars, and an allegation that they can balance the budget. Well, we tried that before and it didn't work out very well.

My contract with America is for our future, and for the future of our children. I don't want us to go back. To guarantee that we keep moving forward we have to be willing to meet the test of our time; to keep doing everything we can for young Americans who are looking to us for help in meeting the world's demands. We can't give in to easy promises. We have to embrace the challenges of the future. And if we do, we'll be rewarded.

The world places many demands on us, but I'm sure you believe, as I do, that that's a test we can pass with flying colors.

Thanks for listening.

END

THE WHITE HOUSE

general- radio
address

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 1, 1993

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
DURING RADIO ADDRESS TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. It's the first day of May, and for many of our high school seniors it's time to begin thinking about their last final exams, packing up their rooms and setting out on the adventures that will come in the next stage of their lives. Whether they are heading to college or looking for their first jobs, these students are getting ready to cross a threshold that will shape them and their futures as people and citizens.

All of us have a big stake in whether these young people have opportunities for success. The great promise of American life has always been expanding opportunities for each succeeding generation -- opportunities for education, for employment, for home ownership, for good health care -- for all those willing to work hard and play by the rules. I am determined that we won't ever lose that promise of American life.

I sought this office because the dreams of working Americans were in deep danger. And I promised all of you that I would work my heart out to restore them. All the work we do in this administration springs from that determination and is rooted in our values, the values that have strengthened our families and given generations of Americans brighter futures than their parents, values that have made this nation without peer, those of opportunity, responsibility and community. With them, we propose putting government back on the side of America's hard pressed families.

In the first 100 days of this administration we've tried to do that. We've worked hard to cut the big government deficit and interest rates are down, enabling millions of Americans to refinance their homes and get interest rates lower in business and consumer loans. We've made a long-term commitment to invest in jobs and education and technology. We've begun to reform the government by cutting unnecessary spending and having tougher lobbying rules and moving to reinvent the whole way government operates. And, of course, we're facing the big crisis of health care, trying to guarantee security to all Americans and control costs so that we can move forward with the kind of basic health care that other people in other countries take for granted, but that threatens to bankrupt America.

In addition to that, I am determined to open the doors of college education and to give American students the opportunity to pay for it through a program of national service. In the last several years, the cost of a college education has become more important than ever before. And yet, those costs have gone up more than any other basic in American life, including health care. We've simply got to do something for all these high school seniors and all

those coming along behind them to open the doors of college education and to help those now in college to stay in and to succeed.

As a first step, I will ask Congress to approve legislation changing the terms of college loans. By giving our students a new way to finance college, we will be able to ensure that many more go and stay. This new method will be called an Excel Account. With it, students will be able to repay the loans on a schedule based on a percentage of their future earnings, and not just on the amount they borrow, as is the case today. This will be nothing less than liberating for many students who drop out of college because of financial strains, or who graduate with big debts and then feel driven into careers with higher pay, but lower satisfaction. A student torn between pursuing a career in teaching or corporate law, for example, will be able to make a career choice based on what he or she wants to do, not how much he or she can earn to pay off college debt.

Another problem with the current student loan system is that far too many students default on their loans, costing taxpayers billions of dollars a year and adding to our deficit. Giving students the chance to pay their loans back as a small percentage of their incomes will reduce the default rate by making it possible for more students to repay. But we're also going to make it tougher for those who can repay the loans to avoid doing it by involving the IRS in the collection process so that those who work and pay taxes must also repay their loans. With this new opportunity must come new responsibility.

But these Excel Accounts are just the beginning. I also want to give tens of thousands of young people the chance to pay for part of their college education or advanced job training through a program of national service. With national service, we can open a new world to a new generation, one where higher learning goes hand-in-hand with a higher purpose of addressing our nation's unmet needs -- educational, social, and environmental. Things that will secure the future, we will all share together.

Americans, without regard to age, will be able to earn credit against college costs before, during, or after college by working as tutors for children, volunteers at hospitals, as public safety officers, or in countless other grassroots community efforts that are working all across America today, but need more help.

College graduates can repay a portion of their loans by working as teachers or police officers in underserved areas. National service will mark the start of a new era for America, one in which every citizen can become an agent of change, armed with the knowledge and experience that a college education brings, and ready to transform the world in which we live, city by city, community by community, block by block, person by person. National service will operate at the level Americans know best -- the grassroots. Its programs will be locally driven, because we trust communities to know what works. And this program is designed and will succeed without a traditional Washington bureaucracy. And, believe me, no one will miss that.

Expanding opportunity, restoring responsibility, reviving our sense of community. These are the values that have always made our country strong. America has always succeeded when we've understood that we're all in this together. With national service, Americans can help themselves by helping each other. It's the best investment we could ever make in our future.

Thank you.

END10:13 A.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 29, 1994

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

*general-radio
address*

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. If I sound a little hoarse today it's because I haven't completely recovered my voice which I lost after I gave the State of the Union address to Congress. You know, I don't like losing my voice, but, frankly, it wouldn't be a bad thing in Washington if more people had to lower their voices and listen to you a little more. I think if they did, it would strengthen their determination to keep fighting to change this country for the better.

A lot of changes have occurred in the last year, and you, basically, deserve the credit for it, even though Congress had to enact the laws that I proposed. There's been an economic plan that cuts the deficit by half a trillion dollars, more than 1.6 million new jobs in the private sector, tax relief for 15 million low and moderate wage workers to reward work over welfare, a family and medical leave law to enable people to take a little time off when there's a child born or a parent sick without losing their jobs, the Brady Bill to keep more guns out of the hands of criminals, more affordable loans for the middle class, and a national service program for young people who want to give something back to their communities and their country and earn credit toward a college education.

And it's beginning to pay off. Yesterday we received very encouraging growth figures for the last three months of 1993. This economic plan is promoting the right kind of recovering and growth through smaller deficits, lower interest rates, lower investment -- lower inflation and productive investment. It's not the kind of growth we had too much in the 1980s where there was ballooning debt and paper prosperity.

I know a lot of you aren't yet feeling the benefits of these changes, and our work won't be done until every American has the security to face the future without fear. But because you've demanded change, Washington finally is addressing America's agenda, the problems you face in your jobs, your communities, and your families.

Because good skills are the only tickets to good jobs and growing incomes, I'm asking Congress this year to invest more in education and training -- to transform the unemployment system into a reemployment system that teaches new skills for new jobs. We need to do more to help people who don't go to college to move from high school to work. And we need to improve all our schools with our Goals 2000 plan, which links world-class standards to grass-roots reforms.

Because the welfare system discourages work and destroys families, I'm asking Congress to help to revolutionize it. For those

who depend on welfare, we should provide the support, the job training and the child care needed for up to two years. But after that, anyone who can work must work.

Change is never easy, and I especially need your help on two crucial challenges -- fighting crime and reforming our health care system. We need to make the criminal justice system work for the victims, not the criminals. And we must make the health care system work for all the hard-working families in this country, and put an end to the inefficiency, the fraud, and the abuse that has made our system the world's most expensive and the only one in the advanced world that doesn't provide some coverage to every family.

I'm asking Congress to pass a strong, smart, tough anticrime bill. We must tell career criminals if you commit a third violent crime, you'll be put away for good. Three strikes and you're out. We should hire 100,000 more police officers to protect our communities. They help to reduce the crime rate. We must ban assault weapons that make criminals better armed than police. And we need more drug training and alternative punishments for young people, like boot camps.

And this year, we must make history by reforming the health care system and providing guaranteed private insurance for every American. The First Lady and I have traveled across the country; we've received almost a million letters. And, you know, the only place where people say there's really no health care crisis is right here in Washington where so many enjoy secure health benefits at reasonable cost paid for by the taxpayers.

Let's face it, the health insurance system is rigged against ordinary families and small businesses. Insurance companies control it. They pick and choose whom they cover; they charge more if your business is too small; they might not cover you at all or a member of your family or one of your employees if you have what they call a preexisting condition. Unless we change things, 58 million Americans may have no coverage at all for some time this year, and experts say three of every 10 small businesses may be forced to stop covering their employees in the years ahead because small business costs are going up so much faster than big business and government costs.

Let those who say there's no crisis tell it to Rick Tarnow of Longview, Texas. He left his job and secure benefits at a large corporation to start a small business. Then his son was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. Because of the disease, the son can't get coverage.

Every insurance company tells the Tarnows, until there's a cure for cystic fibrosis, we will not cover your child. As Rick's wife, Tracy, told my wife, it's devastating enough to learn that your child has a chronic illness, and then to have to deal with the nightmare of insurance.

Those who say there's no crisis should tell it to the Janetakos family of Woburn, Massachusetts. Twelve years ago, Corrine Janetakos had a stroke, leaving her partially paralyzed. Now she and her husband, who owns a painting business, have trouble getting insurance because of her preexisting condition. She wrote to Hillary because -- quote -- "It's been very frustrating arguing my dilemma to the numerous insurance companies that we've applied to for coverage."

Well, with our approach it will be illegal for companies to deny anyone coverage for any reason, and every family will have comprehensive benefits that can never be taken away. The Tarnow

family, the Janetakos family, and millions of other Americans live every day with the health care crisis. It's time we stopped denying there's a crisis and started fixing it.

Now is the time to debate and decide America's real agenda -- health care, crime, jobs and skills, welfare reform, more hope for our young people. The debate is between those who don't even understand how you live and those who understand the urgency of change; between those who don't even see these problems and those who are working to solve them; between those who are comfortable with deadlock and drift and those who call for continuing the American journey of progress and renewal. If you raise your voice, the forces of change will prevail.

With your help, I'll keep speaking out for reforming health care, fighting crime, ending welfare as we know it, and improving our skills, our schools and our future. And I'll try not to shout myself hoarse tomorrow on Super Bowl Sunday.

END

10:11 A.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Clarksburg, West Virginia)

For Immediate Release

May 22,

1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN EDUCATION TOWN HALL MEETING

general-in town
hall meeting

Robert C. Byrd High School
Clarksburg, West Virginia

1:12 P.M. EDT

MR. KITTLE: Mr. President, it's wonderful to have you here in Clarksburg, West Virginia. We have with us today Secretary Riley, Governor and Mrs. Underwood, former governor Gaston Caperton, Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin, House Speaker Robert Kiss, Senator Truman Schafer, Secretary of State Ken Hechler, and Treasurer John Perdue. And all of you distinguished guests, it's a pleasure to have all of you with us today.

Members of our congressional delegation planned to be with us today. However, he thought they should be in Washington because they're working on a very important issue, balancing the budget. So I think he's probably had a telephone call or two back to them already, so that's a very important issue.

Good afternoon. I am Robert Kittle, Superintendent of Harrison County Schools. We're extremely proud to welcome President Clinton to Robert C. Byrd High School and to Clarksburg, West Virginia.

I thank you in our audience for joining us today. Participating in this educational town meeting President Clinton called to action for American education in the 21st century provides strong guidelines for our school districts in West Virginia and across the nation. Here in Harrison County we have developed a management plan that emphasizes rigorous standards for teachers and students' accountability, for a challenging curricula, for safe and drug-free schools, for technology in our classrooms,

and for efficient facilities. These successes came about because of the dedication and hard work of many, and because of our citizens who give financial support to education and hold education as their highest priority.

As a result, we have an excellent goal-oriented school system that exhibits positive results. We have just learned that Norwood Elementary School has been named a national Blue Ribbon school, and Philip Brown, the principal of that school, is here in the audience today with us. I ask Bill to stand. (Applause.)

I am pleased to have the opportunity to moderate this town meeting. And again, I welcome the President and all of you. I would like now to introduce Mary Helen Shields, a senior at Robert C. Byrd High School. Mary Helen has been an excellent student and active in school, community and church activities throughout high school. She was recently named by the faculty and fellow seniors as Ms. Eagle, the highest honor bestowed on a

senior girl. At this time, Mary Helen Shields.

MS. SHIELDS: Mr. President: This is the most exciting moment of my life, and I can't even begin to explain the mixed emotions that I'm feeling right now. It is such an honor and a privilege to be able to stand here beside you in the

presence of my family and friends, and welcome you to Robert C. Byrd High School here in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Speaking for my fellow classmates and for my peers across the state, I want to thank you for your efforts and concerns on education. I am sure that your education Goals 2000 will make us leaders going into the 21st century.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mary Helen. She said she was nervous, but I thought she did a great job, didn't you? Terrific.

Thank you, Bob Kittle, for hosting us here. To Leon Pilewski, the principal, and all the faculty here at Robert Byrd High School. I thank Governor Underwood, Mrs. Underwood, Governor Caperton, the other state officials for being here, the legislative leaders, the local school officials.

The congressional delegation did want to come, but the Senate is voting today on the balanced budget amendment. I'll have a little more to say about that in a minute. But I kind of wish Senator Byrd would have been able to come here, especially to this school, but he and your other legislators have put their duty first, and I respect that and they're where we all want them to be.

I'd like to thank your State Superintendent of Education, Hank Marockie, for being

here; and recognize the President of the State Board of Education, Cleo Matthews, who's here because not only is she the President of the State Board of Education, but her daughter, Sylvia, is the Deputy Chief of Staff to the President. And that's a nice little walk from Hinton, West Virginia, so I thank them for being here. Cleo, thank you. (Applause.)

I thank Mayor Flynn and others for making me feel so welcome in Clarksburg and all the communities along the way where the people came out to say hello. But mostly I want to thank all of you in this audience for joining me to talk about education, about the plans that you have and the plans that I have to make education better; and especially the importance of high standards, to give our children the knowledge and skills they will need to seize the opportunities and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I came here in part because of the great progress you are making in the national movement to raise academic achievement. In 1996, the state of West Virginia tied for third in the nation in improvement since 1992 in the mathematics performance of 4th and 8th graders. You should be very, very proud of that. (Applause.)

I want to thank Governor Underwood for supporting this educational effort and I want to thank my former colleague, with whom I served for many years, Gaston Caperton, for making education his top priority here in West Virginia, among other things, making West Virginia the nation's leader in putting technology in schools.

I believe you either now have or soon will have computers in every single one of your elementary schools in West Virginia. That is something you can be very proud of -- that, the distance learning work you've done. And I want to tell you all, if you don't know, in addition to being on public broadcasting here in West Virginia and whatever else the networks choose to pick up tonight, we are live on the Internet in West Virginia and across the country. So you're in cyberspace and I hope you're having a good time there. (Applause.)

For the last four years we have worked very hard to advance our goals in education, to make sure all our children are ready to learn; to make sure that they have good basic skills, from expanding Head Start to the Goals 2000 program, which West Virginia has used, to have grass-roots efforts to raise academic performance; to our School-to-Work program, to help the learning of young people who don't go on to colleges but do deserve to have good access to further training after high school; to open the doors of college to all Americans.

The balanced budget agreement that I reached with the leaders of Congress provides for the largest increased investment in education in a generation. If the Senate adopts it -- the House has already adopted it by a better than 75 percent vote -- if the Senate adopts it, that's what it will do. It expands Head Start, moving toward our goal of a million kids in Head Start by 2002. It funds our America Reads program, designed to mobilize a million volunteer reading tutors across America to ensure that every

8-year-old in this country can read independently by the end of the third grade. Very important in a country that is as diverse as ours is becoming.

We have four school districts in America where there are more than 100 different native ethnic linguistic groups. That's a stunning statistic. But everybody has to be able to read in our common language of English, so this is very important.

We also have the largest increased investment in higher education since the G.I. Bill was passed at the end of World War II; a HOPE Scholarship tax credit for families designed to make two years of education after high school as universal as a high school diploma is today; tax deductions for the costs of all tuition after high school and the biggest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years. It will add 300,000 more people who are eligible for the Pell Grant program -- something which will be especially helpful in a state like West Virginia.

In addition to that, we have funding to try to follow your lead to make sure that we can connect every classroom and library in the United States to the Internet by the year 2000. But the most important thing of all in our education program I believe is the effort to develop national standards and a national measure of whether those standards are being met. Because from West Virginia to Nevada, from Washington State to Florida, from Maine to Arizona, math is the same, the need for basic reading skills are the same.

I called in my State of the Union address for national standards of excellence in basic learning. Not federal government standards, but national standards, starting with fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, and reflected in examinations which I would challenge every school, every state, every student to participate in by 1999.

I have proposed that these exams be based on the only widely accepted national standards based test we have today, called the National Assessment of Education Progress. When I just said that West Virginia ranked third in the country in progress and performance in math tests, that is based on your students' performance on the so-called NAEP test, the National Assessment of Education Progress. But today we only give those tests to a sampling of students in states, and we only know what either the state scores are or, in some cases, the district or regional scores are. So we have to do this for the whole nation.

Today I am pleased to announce that Governor Underwood, along with the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education, has agreed that West Virginia should participate in these examinations in 1999. And I'm grateful to him and you should be proud of it. (Applause.)

In addition, Massachusetts and the National Alliance

of Business are endorsing our call for national tests. West Virginia, Massachusetts, the National Alliance of Business join several other states and other groups in the growing national consensus for standards. And I am very, very encouraged.

Let me also say that, you know my native state of Arkansas has a lot in common with West Virginia. In the 1980 census we were the two states with the highest percentage of people living in the states who were born there. And we also have had to struggle with low incomes and an economy that was not easily changeable to meet the demands of the modern world. And I'd like to think that we believe that our children are as gifted as children anywhere, and that if we give them high standards, good teaching and good parental support and good support in the schools they can do as well as students anywhere in the world.

So, again, Governor, thank you. And thank you to all the educators. We're going to do this, and it's important. (Applause.)

Now, before we open the floor to questions, I thought you might be interested in just seeing what these exams are like. So we'll go through a question or two, just so you'll get the feeling for what a 4th grade -- we'll start with the 4th grade reading exam and you'll see why this is important. If you have a standards exam -- it's not like giving an exam in class where somebody might grade on the curve and two people can make an A and everybody else has to make something lower. Standards based exams are designed to assure that everybody can pass, but to pass it means something. It means you know what you need to know. So no one is supposed to fail, and this is not designed to put any school, any student, and group down, but to lift us all up. The tests are designed so that if they don't work out so well the first time, you'll know what to do to teach, to improve and lift these standards.

But it's very important to understand the difference between a standards based test and normal grading, where you expect somebody to make 100 and somebody to make 60 and everybody to be in between. With the idea of standards you want everybody to clear at least the fundamental bar.

So let's look at the charts here. Chart 1 describes the 4th grade reading test and the standard performance is divided into three categories. Basic performance means that a reader can recognize most of the words, identify the most important information. The next level is proficient. In addition to that, you can summarize the passage, find specific information and describe the way it's presented.

Then, an advanced understanding would be that you could provide a more detailed and thoughtful explanation. And I'll give you an example of that by asking one of your students to join me -- Hannah Galey, who is a 4th-grader from Nutter Fort Intermediate, is going to come forward. Hannah is going to read us a passage from Charlotte's Web, a wonderful book I'm sure a lot of the adults here read with your children when they were little.

Hannah? Give her a hand. (Applause.)

HANNAH: "Having promised Wilbur that she would save his life, she was determined

to keep her promise. Charlotte was naturally patient. She knew from experience that if she waited long enough, a fly would come to her web. And she felt sure that if she thought long enough about Wilbur's problem, an idea would come to her mind.

Finally, one morning toward the middle of July, the idea came. 'Why, how perfectly simple,' she said to herself. 'The way to save Wilbur's life is to play a trick on Zuckerman. If I can fool a bug,' thought Charlotte, 'I can surely fool a man. People are not as smart as bugs.'"

THE PRESIDENT: That's wonderful. (Applause.) That's great. Give her a hand. You were great. If we were giving a read score, she would be double advanced, you know. (Laughter.) Thank you.

Now, here's the way the question would work for a 4th grader: Based upon the passage you just read, how would you describe Charlotte to a friend? And then, these are three possible answers, and you see how they would be graded based on what I just said. A basic proficiency would be, Charlotte keeps her promise. That's basic standards. A proficient answer would be, Charlotte works hard to keep her promise, describing that she hasn't kept it yet, she's working to keep it. And then, an advanced understanding would just explain in one sentence what the whole paragraph was about. She plans to keep her promise to save Wilbur's life, what the promise is -- by tricking Zuckerman how she plans to keep it. All three things.

But you can see if you give -- and obviously there are various variations, but the test would be -- the answers would be aggregated in three categories like that. So that you would have some sense of how the children were reading.

Now, let's look at Chart 4, which will show how our 4th graders are doing. Again, this is the national assessment of education progress. This is the reading version of the math test that I just quoted that West Virginia was third in the country in improvement on, given to a representative sample of 4th graders in America; 40 percent did not do as well as saying, "Charlotte keeps her promise" -- could not say that's what this was about.

Now, you know, some of these young people may not have English as a first language, but a lot of them do and still are not reading at an advanced enough level. That is why it is so important that we provide in every community an army of trained reading tutors to help support the parents and support the literacy efforts under way and support the schools.

Thirty percent cleared the first hurdle. This is about Charlotte keeping a promise. Twenty-three percent were more proficient; they knew it was her plan, she was outlining her plan. Only seven percent of the 4th graders went as far as saying, she plans to keep her promise to save the life by tricking the man -- you see?

So it shows you that ideally we would like 100 percent in advance, but at least we

need 100 percent at basic or above. And so the idea of giving the exam would be not to be to identify failures, but to show schools and school districts how well children are reading based on what they understand, so that everybody would reach a certain understanding. That way their performance in all subsequent grades would improve. A lot of children have the mental capacity to do very well in school and fall further and further behind because they didn't get the comprehension they needed early on.

Now, I want to show you one other chart, and we'll come back to this at the end of the program. This is a sample 8th grade math test -- so ask yourself this question -- no answer forthcoming now: A car has a fuel tank that holds 15 gallons of fuel. The car consumes five gallons of fuel for every 100 miles. A trip of 250 miles was started with a full tank of fuel. How much fuel remained in the tank at the end of the trip. And there are four answers: 2.5 gallons, 12.5 gallons, 17.5 gallons, five gallons. We'll come back to that at the end of the show. That's designed to hold viewer interest out there. (Laughter.)

So that's basically what these standards tests are designed to do. I wanted to come here and talk about that because West Virginia has not only proved that you can have a big increase in teacher's salaries, which is wonderful; one of the best student-teacher ratios in America, which is wonderful; the

most aggressive plan to put computers in elementary schools in the country, which is terrific and helps to reinforce standards learning; but you're also showing that you can raise standards, and today, with the Governor's statement, that you want to do more.

So with that, I'd like to hear from about any of these educational matters you would like to discuss, questions you'd like to ask, statements you'd like to make and we'll go back to our leader here, but Kittle. Thank you.

MR. KITTLE: We're ready now to do the Town Hall meeting, so we're ready to open for questions for the President.

THE PRESIDENT: Here's some over here.

MR. KITTLE: Over here?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, over there. And there's some there.

PRESIDENT HARDESTY: Mr. President, I am David Hardesty, President of West Virginia University, we welcome you.

Adopting national standards involves changing a lot of things in America. It involves a cultural change in many respects, especially if those standards are historically different in school district. I wonder if you would identify the major impediments to the adoption of such a program and how we, as educators and parents and community leaders, can help you address this important initiative.

THE PRESIDENT: I think there are two major barriers from what I've heard. The first is a political one, the second one is a deeply personal one, almost.

The political one is sometimes when people say "national standards" -- and Secretary Riley and I have to deal with this all across America -- when people say "national standards," they say, I don't want the federal government setting standards for my school. That is not what this is about. All the federal government proposes to do is to fund the development of the tests to measure whether the standards are being met.

The National Assessment of Education Progress tests, which you participate in, was developed by educators, academics and other experts. The federal government is not running this test. We are not telling you that you have to participate in it. The whole thing is voluntary. But I believe every state will want to be a part of it when it is obviously a process that has integrity that will help our children.

So the first thing is we have to tell people, this is not some attempt of the federal government to take over your schools. We have done a lot in our administration to get rid of a lot of the federal rules and regulations associated with grant programs, to try to give local school districts more flexibility as long as they were developing academic standards that they could hold themselves accountable for. That's the first thing.

The second thing -- big problem, I think, is it's scary, it's personal. You're afraid -- what happens if you take it and you don't do very well. And I think the important thing there is that we are not -- we want all of our children to take it, but we're not necessarily trying to identify the specific score of every student, but we want the schools and the classes to see how they're doing so they can lift the students up. I don't want anybody's score published in the paper or anything like that. This is not an instrument of failure, it's an instrument of accountability and a pathway to success.

But I can tell you, when you look at other countries with which we're competing for the high-wage jobs of tomorrow --

huge issue in West Virginia -- now, for years -- I was looking at the topography of West Virginia, which looks like about half of Arkansas -- all of these mountains and how beautiful it is. For years, it made it hard for you to diversify your economy. You had coal in the ground, but it was hard for people to get here and do other things, and it slowed up the diversification of your economy and kept your wage levels too low.

The explosion of technology will mean that many kinds of work can be done anywhere in America and anywhere in the world. And it both gives you an enormous new opportunity, but a much higher responsibility to lift your education level. So we've got to get people over the idea that they have to be scared of how this thing comes out.

No matter how bad it is, once you get a road map it will be better next year and it will be better the year after that. And all the evidence is that children do better with higher

expectations. To me, those are the two things. If you can confront those two things head on, go out here and tell the citizens of West Virginia the government is not trying to run a testing program and take over your schools, number one; and number two, don't be scared of how it comes out because it's going to make us better in the long run.

MR. KITTLE: Okay. Time for the next question. Let's take one from this group over here.

MR. MACE: Frank Mace -- Mr. President, the federal government does an excellent job of funding positions for reading specialists in schools where there is high concentration of poverty. My question: With the new educational standards, will we see increased funding so that we can have reading specialists in all elementary schools so that we can achieve your standard of having children read by the time they get to 3rd grade?

THE PRESIDENT: What's the answer to that, Secretary Riley? Yes? Secretary, just tell him what you just said. (Laughter.) This is something I'm very proud of. I'll give you the intro. In addition to the million volunteers we're going to try to get to support you, those of you who do this at a higher level of skill on a full-time basis, we are also going to provide -- that's what he was about to say.

SECRETARY RILEY: The America Reads Challenge, which is the President's proposal to have all children read well and independently by the end of the 3rd grade, calls for funding from the federal government; people chosen, of course, and connected with your local schools, chosen by your schools, who would be reading specialists to work with one million volunteers who then would work one on one for kids who need special help working with the teacher to make sure they can read well. So the answer is yes, many times over.

THE PRESIDENT: Twenty-five thousand extra reading specialists, so that should put one in every school. (Applause.) Now, let me ask you something. You say you're a reading recovery teacher, and have you had great results with it? You know, the reading recovery program revolutionized literacy in the whole nation of New Zealand --

SECRETARY RILEY: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and is probably the most consistently effective reading program that any of us know about. It's more intensive and it's more expensive, and what we're trying to do is to create a network where, in effect, people like you can be at the center of a hub that reaches out that includes reading specialists and all the volunteers so we'll have enough hopefully to cover what every child needs.

MR. KITTLE: Mr. President, before you continue, I'd like you to hear from a reading teacher that we have with us

today. Mr. President, we have with us Donna Rose in our audience, a reading teacher who teaches in an exemplary school, Lost Creek Elementary School. She would like to comment on the Title I program.

Donna.

MS. ROSE: Mr. President, when you showed us the reading question from Charlotte's Web, I realized what we do as teachers every day in the primary grades makes the difference in a child's life and the child's education. I know that the work that we do at our school at Lost Creek will help our students to be able to answer this type of question by grade 4.

I'd like to tell you a little bit what we do at Lost Creek Elementary School. We work hard; we use some well-known strategies such as reading recovery, which is a one-on-one early intervention program. We teach through thematic programs and writing activities.

Our program also includes our parents in activities with their children. For example, yesterday at our school, parents were given information on reading, along with playing Bingo for books. Students and their parents received free books. Parent involvement is very important in the education of our children. We have set high standards for our students and our parents. We have found great success in our reading program.

Our standardized test scores at our school over the last five years have steadily improved. One of the reasons that our school has been able to have a successful reading program is because of the Title I funding and the flexibility that it's allowed us. We would like to thank you for your support in the Title I program. But I would also like to ask what other type of programs you are supporting that would help our schools in the future.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say, first of all I thank you for what you are doing because I think it's very important. It's the most important thing, especially with the parents being involved. One of the things that we have done that I'm most proud of is the way we redid the Title I program, because when we got here, Secretary Riley and I got here and we had been governors living with the Title I program for years, we thought it was really selling our lower-income children in our poorer school districts short, basically creating a two-tiered system of education. And instead, we tried to organize it so that you grass-roots teachers could use it to lift the performance level of children who were covered by Title I, and I think that's what you've done, and I'm very thrilled by it.

Now, what we're trying to do now in addition to what we've just been talking about on the standards, first we want to increase the availability of pre-school education so that more kids will come to school prepared to learn. Secondly, we want to try to do what we can to support the literacy programs in the schools; we explained that.

And then we've taken the basic education programs that we have on the books now in

this balanced budget plan and tried to continue or dramatically increase the funding of as many of them as we could. We are particularly interested in trying to help enhance math and science education and, as I said earlier, trying to accelerate the movement of computers and connection to the Internet and good educational software and trained teachers in every classroom in America, and that's a big part of this program.

So I hope that all those things together will make a significant difference when we finish this work over the next four to five years.

MR. KITTLE: Let's take a question from one of the students now.

THE PRESIDENT: You've got a bunch of them. Your choice.

MR. KITTLE: Let's take the one here on the front row on the left.

THE PRESIDENT: Sure. We'll take both of them. Go ahead.

JENNIFER: Mr. President, my name is Jennifer Brown and I am a 5th grade student at Simpson Elementary School. I am frequently involved in the arts, music and theatre programs that my school and the Harrison County Board of Education sponsors; but recently the fundings for these programs has been cut. I was wondering what plans you have, if any, to make sure that the arts aren't completely cut out of the school curriculum. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Wonderful. Well, first of all, let me say that historically the main support for arts and education out in the country from the national government has come through programs like the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities -- because most of the big money coming from the national government to the schools has come to schools that have basically low taxes bases, low income, or to students with special needs. And the idea was that if the federal government dealt with -- gave extra money to poor schools or gave extra money to students with special needs because their costs were higher, then the states and the localities would be able to keep up the rest of the programs.

There has been an alarming decline all over America in the arts and music programs and, I might say, in the athletic programs, apart from the big school teams. And I think it's a serious mistake, because we now know that a lot of young people develop their intellectual capacities in different ways, different kids learn in different ways, and that we really are significantly eroding the future of our -- certain segments of our children if we deprive them of access to the arts and music and, even if they're not varsity football or basketball players or baseball players, to other sports.

But we don't -- except through the National Endowment for the Arts, we've done some things that benefit public schools -- we don't have direct programs to do that

because we spend all our money on other things. But I must say, I personally believe it's a mistake for schools to cut back on it. And when I was a governor I tried to dedicate enough funding to these purposes, to try to offset it -- even though usually the decisions about the curriculum are made completely at the local level. I think that may be the problem, that all schools from time to time have financial problems. And it may be that because there's not a specific funding stream for a lot of these programs they're more likely to be left undefended.

I think the best way to keep them is for you and students like you to point out that you think it's an important part of your education.

Q Mr. President, my name is Ashby Hardesty and I'm a 5th grader from Nutter Fort Elementary School. I was wondering if you use the Internet in the White House.

THE PRESIDENT: We do.

SECRETARY RILEY: All right. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: But my daughter uses it more than I do. (Laughter.) We access the Internet in the White House and we also have extensive e-mail, but my speechwriters use the Internet. They can do research on the Internet, they pull up

articles and things. We use the Internet for all kinds of things.

When I become curious, I can always go down to the Vice President's office, because he's a bigger expert than I am, and we'll have -- we have interesting environmental discussions based on things he pulls up for me on the Internet. But the White House uses the Internet quite a lot.

MR. KITTLE: Okay, let's hear from one of the parents over in this section.

Jim?

Q Mr. President, welcome to West Virginia.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Q My name is Jim McCallum. I'm a member of the West Virginia Board of Education. I'd like to divert just a little bit from the theme at hand but stay within the educational realm and ask you what your opinions are as to the extending of the school year here in the States in light of the fact that the students in Japan and most of the European countries go to school 20, 30, 40 or even more days per year than our students.

THE PRESIDENT: I have always thought if you could afford it, it was a good thing to do. I think that the only major industrial country with a shorter school year than we have that I'm aware of is Belgium, and I'm not quite sure what the historic reasons for it

are. But Belgium does have a shorter school year than we do. Every other nation in the world with an advanced economy has a longer school year.

And as you know, basically the American school year was developed around an agricultural society when all of the children had to get off and help their folks in the fields. A lot of our more overcrowded school districts now are now open year-round. They just operate on three trimesters, and the students have to go to two of three trimesters. And obviously that reduces by a third the amount of new school construction they have to do, although it costs more, obviously, to operate the schools and pay the personnel.

I think on balance it's a good thing to do. I think that -- let me just say what we're learning already from the NAEP tests and other things in math. What we're learning in mathematics, for example, in the higher years is that our students may skip over a large number of subjects and touch a large number of subjects -- for example, in advance mathematics, but our competitors in East Asia and in Germany, for example, may study slightly fewer subjects, because they're in school longer, they go into much greater depth, which means when they get out of high school, they carry a higher level of capacity with them.

So if you are going to lengthen the school year, I would say the first thing you ought to do is bring educators and others in and say, well, if we went to school longer, what would we do with the time. I mean, you don't want the kids to get bored.

In a lot of states like our home state, every time we talked about lengthening the school year, they would tell me about how many schools weren't properly air-conditioned, and we would have the teachers and the kids passing out and all that kind of stuff.

It's very unpopular, lengthening the school year, but I was always for it. I just think you need to analyze -- and I think you get more support if you say, here is what we would do if we went to school a week longer, here is what we would do with that time if we went to school two weeks longer, here is what we would do with that time. And then, of course, you have to figure

out how you're going to pay for it and what kind of offset you get with questions like the young lady asked here about already having cutbacks in other things. On balance, I think it would be better if we had a slightly longer school year, I do.

MR. KITTLE: Okay, let's move over to Senator Sharpe.

SENATOR SHARPE: I'm Bill Sharpe, Western West Virginia. President Pro Temp of the West Virginia Senate. And first of all, I'd like to thank you for coming to West Virginia. And I'd say you're doing a beautiful job. More or less, I'd like to point out and congratulate you on the basis of grading. I notice back -- you said you used to do it on a curve, and in engineering school we did a lot of that on the curve, and you pointed out early that you're getting back to the three Responsible, the reading and the

arithmetic, but you don't say anything about writing. I think somewhere along the line, you might have some ideas on writing.

I know back in engineering school when they were grading on a curve, sometimes the difference between an E and F for Bill Sharpe was the fact that whether he wrote his name properly and in the right manner. So I would like for you to elaborate on that if you would be so kind.

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, let me say I do not -- if I were in a different line of work -- for example, if I were the Superintendent of Schools here like Mr. Kittle, or if I were the state superintendent of public education, I would not say that we should only have high standards in reading for 4th graders and math for 8th graders. It's just that this is the -- we have to make a beginning somewhere as a nation, so I'm trying to get us to make a beginning as a nation with this in

I would have -- we already have an enormous amount of work that's been done, for example, by the science teachers to have national standards in science. And National Geographic has spent a fortune to work with geography teachers to develop national standards in geography and teaching materials for it. And there are national standards in civics, and there should be standards in reading and language generally that go from the 4th grade to the 8th grade. And there ought to be -- and one in high school, perhaps 10th grade. And in my dream world, before too long we would have this 4th grade reading test and this 8th grade test replicated in elementary, junior high and high school in several areas, and then all the schools in the country could pick and choose about what they would participate in.

Obviously, if you went to the 8th grade, and certainly in the high school, you would want a writing sample as well. I'm interested in -- more and more of the college application forms you see a lot of you -- I'm sort of into this now, as a lot of you know -- (laughter) -- are requiring young people to write an essay to get into college. And I think it's a very good thing. So I would agree that writing and the measurement of writing capacity should be a very important part of a national standards program once you move beyond the 4th grade into junior high and then into high school. It's very important that young people be able to express themselves.

MR. KITTLE: Let's move back to this side.

THE PRESIDENT: What were you going to say? Secretary Riley wants to say something. Talk to him about our summer program, Dick.

SECRETARY RILEY: I think it's important for us to tell the people in West Virginia about our program, Read, Write Now, which is a summer program to encourage young people to read and write every day in the summer, only 30 minutes, with a reading partner at least one day a week; for them to get a library card of their own. The reading partner -- of course, the

partner could be a parent or an older brother or sister or a friend or a member of the Rotary Club or whatever.

But we think that it is so important for young people over the summer months -- especially disadvantaged young people who probably don't have books and magazines around their house -- not to have that gap in the summer. Because those who slip in the summer in reading and writing never seem to get caught up. And we think that's very important, to get those kids -- 1-800-USA-LEARN, call that number and we can send them to you, for your classroom. And it is free and it has all the instructions simply written by very professional educators.

We had over a million last year and we'll have over a million and a half this year. At the end of the summer the reading partner signs a certificate that the kid did -- that they did this every week and they get a free pizza from Pizza Hut.

MR. KITTLE: Let's move on to the back row.

THE PRESIDENT: While she's taking the microphone back there, Senator, let me say one other thing.

SENATOR SHARPE: You have the floor, sir. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: There is a lot -- and you probably know this -- there is a lot of educational research that shows just as some young people learn better when they're exposed to music and the arts. there are some young people whose learning increases exponentially even if they're not particularly literate at the time when they begin to write, and they begin to write stories of their own life and stories of how they want to -- so it triggers their imagination in a way that nothing else quite can. So I think it's very important that this be taught even before it's tested.

MR. ESCHENMANN: Mr. President, my name is Jim Eschenmann -- I'm a proud parent of a four-year-old preschooler.

Your administration, as well as the local board of education, has placed a large emphasis on connecting every classroom to the Internet. What additional measures can we take to protect our school students from the harmful areas of the Internet while guaranteeing full access to post secondary students and to protect the freedom of speech?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, I signed a bill -- when I signed the telecommunications bill, which I believe will create hundreds of thousands of jobs in our country along with the agreement we've made to open telecommunication competition in the world to American products and services -- I had a provision in there to try to protect against young people being exposed to some of the harmful things that are on the Internet. Not just pornography but, as I'm sure a lot of you know because of the events in the news in the last couple of years, there are even instructions on how to

build bombs and things like that. There are lot of things on there that we wouldn't want our children to see.

That provision has been thrown out by a court and is still in the courts, I think. So it may be that what we have to do is try to develop something like the equivalent of what we're developing for you for television, like the V-chip, where it's put in the hands of the parents or the educators. And then if it were in the hands of the educators the school board could approve certain guidelines.

It's technically more difficult with the Internet. As you know, there are hundreds of new services being added to the Internet every week. It's growing at an explosive capacity and we're in the process actually of trying to develop an Internet II. But I think that is the answer. Something like the

V-chip for televisions. And we're working on it. I think it's a serious potential problem myself.

But let me say it would be a serious potential problem if they were not in the schools. I think putting them in the schools, because the kids are normally under supervision, you have a far less likelihood that the Internet will be abused or that the children will be exposed to something they shouldn't see during the school hours, in all likelihood, than at home. But I do think you need guidelines in both places and we're doing our best to try to figure out if there's some technological fix we can give you on it.

MR. KITTLE: Mr. President, before we continue, I'd like for you to hear from one of our students here in the audience. Mr. President, we have Jeremy Thompson, a National Merit finalist from Bridgeport High School, who would like to comment on how the high standards and a good education has helped him through school.

Jeremy.

JEREMY: Mr. President, I think that there's been many factors that have contributed to my success. One of them would have to be the structure of my education. I had a strong background in reading and basic math in elementary school, which has allowed me to focus on more difficult subjects in high school.

Another thing is teacher enthusiasm. I feel very fortunate to have had even a half dozen really enthusiastic teachers who have inspired me to learn all I can about their subjects. I think students aren't inspired to learn when teachers aren't excited to teach. But in Harrison County, through the exposure to technology and through the strong teaching, I'm prepared to compete against students from anywhere in the nation.

I'd like to ask you if you feel that in addition to the standardized tests in 4th and 8th grades, do you think it would be appropriate for students to have to pass a national exam to graduate from high school and, if so, what would be the minimum levels in english, math and science?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, New York, for many years, has had a Regents exam that you actually had to pass to get a full-fledged high school diploma. And I believe that Louisiana several years ago adopted an 11th grade exam that you had to pass to go into high school. When I was governor of our state we passed a requirement that you had to pass an exam in the 8th grade to be promoted to high school.

I basically believe that it would be a good thing if you had a standard -- an exam like this -- not one you have to make a certain score on, but one you have to show certain competence on -- to move to different levels of education. If one were being given in high school I would like to see it be given in the 11th grade so it could be given again in the summer so young people can go on to their senior year. Or if it were a condition of a diploma, it should be given very early so it can be taken at least twice more. Because if you give an exam that you have to make a certain score on or show certain competencies on to get a diploma after you've been put through 11 years of school, I think you ought to be given more than one shot.

But I think that generally, if we can move to standard based education so that every young person in America can stand up and make the statement about their early education that you just made, then it would be a good thing to have certain benchmarks along the way so you would make sure that if you were sending somebody to that next level, they really could do the work.

Otherwise, you can really, I think, hurt a lot of young people. There are so many young people -- there's lots of evidence that a lot of young people have difficulty in high school years because they never got the basic skills they needed in the early years, and they get sort of typed as being inadequate as if they don't have the intellectual capacity to do it. And the truth is that way over 90 percent of us can do way over 90 percent of what we need to do in any given field of endeavor, given a proper level of preparation, the proper level of support and a proper level of effort. So I would like to see something like that, but if you did it in the high school before graduation, I think we would have to start it early and give everybody more than one chance to pass.

MR. KITTLE: Let's move over to this section. President Esbhbach?

DR. ESBHBACH: Mr. President, I'm Janet Dudley Esbhbach, President of Fairmont State College in Fairmont, West Virginia with a branch here in Clarksburg. We are very excited about the America Reads Challenge program and want to be involved. However, it presents a little bit of a problem for some college presidents to devote 50 percent of their work-study dollars to this program. We want to participate; we have said we would participate. But would you be open to the idea that there might be other mechanisms in which we could participate or by which we could participate?

For example, we have a very successful community service learning program through which our students volunteer and earn college credit. It would seem to me that we could perhaps -- and this is as much to the Secretary as to yourself -- perhaps in that

same way through volunteerism and college credit, participate and achieve the same ends that you are seeking through America Reads.

THE PRESIDENT: Number one, absolutely. And secondly, let me make it clear what we asked to be done with work-study. We have not asked anybody to devote half of their work-study students to America Reads. What we did do is to say last year we increased the number of work-study students by 100,000 over the next couple of years in our budget last year by 200,000 -- excuse me.

In my new budget, we put another 100,000 in there so that within a matter of three years we'll go from -- nationwide from 700,000 work-study students total to one million. What we really were shooting for is to get 100,000 of the next 300,000 into reading tutoring. We were urging the colleges, if they could, to, in effect, give up that number of hours of students working on campus to work in reading.

So we're not trying to get anybody to give up half their Work Study students. And so you could more easily calibrate kind of what your share was if you wanted to participate, but there is not mandate on that.

Secondly, I would love it if you did it that way, because another thing I'm trying to do what we emphasized at the Summit of Service in Philadelphia with the former Presidents and General Powell and I sponsored at the Volunteer Summit is that I hope that every college in America will start giving a credit for community service and we'll try to channel all of its students into community service. So if you did it that way, I would be elated.

You just have to make sure -- let me just say, you just have to make sure, and I'm sure our reading teacher over here would say that you just have to make sure that you've got enough time to give the minimal training to do what needs to be done, and that in this -- whatever you have to do to get the credit. They'll be spending enough time with one student or two students or however many to really do the kids some good that

they're helping.

But I would love that, because I think every -- I'd like to see every college in America follow your lead and give students credit for doing community service.

MR. KITTLE: Let's move over to this section over here. All right. The lady in the blue.

MS. SCHAEFFER: Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Patricia Schaeffer and I am the parent of a 4th grade child at Morgantown. My question to you is that in regards to technology. West Virginia, as you pointed out, has shared leadership along with the federal government in providing technology to our students. The question we have is, how do we ensure that technology will be accessible, given the substantial costs involved, to all of our children, especially the children in the rural areas, something that we face a lot here in West Virginia, so that all children will have the opportunity for

a quality education using technology, such as we have here at Robert C. Byrd High School?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I can tell you what we're doing. What we are doing is to -- let me get my brace out of the way here -- let me tell you what we're doing. We have provided some money in each of the next five years in our budget to go to states to try to put with help we get from the private sector and any money that the states want to put in to try to make sure that all the schools get covered.

Frankly, the principal beneficiaries of this should be the most rural schools and the poorest inner-city schools, because of a lot of the other schools are going to get computers just in the normal course of events. And the whole program will be a failure if we don't hook it up to all the rural schools.

When we started this, when the Vice President and I started this, we went out to California a couple of years ago and hooked up 20 percent of the classrooms in California in one day. And we got all those high-tech companies in Silicon Valley to do that. And then we went to New Jersey and highlighted what they had done there to turn around a district that was in trouble.

My whole idea was that this would make it possible if we did it right for the first time in the history of the country for kids in the poorest urban districts and the most remote rural districts to have access to the same information in the same way in the same time as the students in the wealthiest public and private schools in America.

I mean, if we do this right, it could revolutionize access to learning. So I think you've got to get the computers out there, but secondly, we have to make sure the teachers are trained and, third, we have to make sure that the software is good.

So the answer to your question is, my goal is going to be to see that every state is going to have to have a plan and that's how we put the money out. Go ahead.

SECRETARY RILEY: Mr. President, let me add also that we in the administration strongly supported the Federal Communications Commission in their recent use of the telecommunication proviso that said they could charge a separate rate for classroom teaching and for libraries. And we urged upon them the so-called "E rate." It was passed here recently. It could mean -- it will mean to education in general in terms of exactly what you're talking about -- some \$2.25 billion a year. And it's a major thing for education and for poor schools in very poor districts to have the Internet access and use of technology will be up to 90 percent discounted. The average will be around 60 percent, but that's going to be a tremendous benefit for that program.

THE PRESIDENT: You understand what he's talking about? The poorest schools can have -- we'll make it as close to free as we can to hook on to the Internet, which will make a big difference, because a lot of our schools were worried about getting the equipment and the software and everything else and just not being able to afford to stay

hooked up. But the E-rate that the Federal Communications Commission approved will be a 90-percent discount for the poorest schools in the country and an average 60 percent discount. So that should mean that everybody out in the hills and hollows of North Arkansas and West Virginia should be able to afford to keep wired up.

MR. KITTLE: Great. Let's take the lady on the front row.

MS. PRICE: My name is Pina Price and I have my own business in tax preparation and I'm also an auditor for worker's comp, West Virginia. I heard you on TV mentioning more than once that you were trying to make it more affordable for the children to go to college by giving the parents a tax break in deducting the tuition.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

MS. PRICE: Well, I'd like to know if it's going to happen, and also I would like to know if -- have you ever given any thought of giving the newly graduate a tax break that have enormous student loans to pay back before your law comes into effect?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer to your question is, yes, it is going to happen. And the only question is, we haven't actually passed the actual tax bill through the Congress yet, but we have allocated roughly \$35 billion over a five-year period to provide tax relief against the cost of college education.

And we know that, among other things, there will be a tax credit -- that is a dollar-for-dollar reduction off your taxes; for the first two years of college for an amount that will be roughly equal to the cost of a typical community college. So you can take that as just off your taxes as a tax credit. Because our goal is to try to make two years of education after high school as universal as a high school diploma is today.

If you look at the last census figures we have in 1990 show that young people who have two years of -- younger workers, now, it's not the same for older workers -- but younger workers who have two years of education or more after high school tend to get jobs with rising incomes. Young people who have less than two years of education after high school tend to get jobs with stagnant incomes. Young kids who are high school drop-outs tend to get jobs with declining incomes. So it would be a tax credit.

In addition to that, there will be a tax deduction from your taxable income for the cost of any tuition after high school -- not just the first two years, any tuition -- the second two years, post-graduate, vocational, any tuition after high school.

Now, beyond that, what we tried to do to help young people when they come out is for the schools that are in the Department of Education's direct college loan program, young people have the option of choosing to pay back their loans -- they have big loans -- either on a regular repayment schedule, which would be hard for them, particularly if they have become school teachers or police officers or nurses or something else where they're not making a lot of money.

They have the option of paying that back as a percentage of their income, which lifts a huge burden off of them in the early years. So we've tried to do that. But the main

focus of our efforts in this tax bill will be the tax credit and the tax deduction. But the details of it are still somewhat open because, obviously, Congress hasn't acted. And Secretary Riley and I talked about it on the way up here today, what we could do that would do the most good for the largest number of people.

MS. FOLIO: Hello, I'm Katherine Folio and I'm the proud parent of a 7th grader. And my question to you is what are you going to do with the gifted programs under your new educational program?

THE PRESIDENT: Support them. You want to talk any more about that, Secretary Riley? Support them. I think they should be supported.

SECRETARY RILEY: Of course, the whole standards process is pulling kids towards the same way that gifted kids are taught now, really high standards, challenging assessment, engaging education to lift the level of learning.

One of the important parts of gifted education is the advanced placement program, which really, for high school kids -- and your son or daughter will be getting on up there soon -- is to take advanced placement courses and really get college credit. It's a money saving thing, too. In our current budget we've got \$6 million, as I recall, to really for the first time get a significant effort out to help with advanced placement. And we support local schools in their gifted and talented efforts.

THE PRESIDENT: The more factually accurate answer to your question is the one Secretary Riley gave. Just about all we do for gifted education is to support advanced placement, and we're going to promote more of that. But, philosophically, I strongly support it. I do believe -- and let me say when I was governor of my state we actually put it into our academic standards that every district had to offer special opportunities for gifted students. And we actually had a funding stream in our education formula for it. So I'm strongly committed to it.

But I think the larger problem in American education is that we've given up on too many of the other students. Because I believe -- I'll say again, I believe more than 90 percent of the students are capable of learning way over 90 percent of what they need to know to keep this country in the forefront of the world and keep their opportunities the richest in the world in the 21st century. And that what we really need to focus on, is lifting our sights so that everybody can stand up and make the speech this young man did when they get out of high school.

I do strongly support gifted programs, but I think as a nation what we need to do is to say the school districts and the states should fund those gifted programs. we should support nationally advanced placement, but the main thing we ought to do is be lifting

the sights of all of our children.

MR. KITTLE: Okay, I'll take Jim Archer next.

MR. ARCHER: Mr. President, my name is Jim Archer, I'm a production manager at Northrup Grumman. I guess I'm here because of not only my personal commitment to partnerships in education, but also the companies and the communities commitment to partnerships in education. A wise man once said that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. And I heard a wiser man say if you feed the horse salt, the horse will look for water. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's pretty good.

MR. ARCHER: And I wanted to say that it's the challenge of the community to really be that salt for our young people. Our student said it so well, that it was a few teachers

that enlightened him to go on and to become. And it's the responsibility of the whole community to do that.

I had an interesting experience lately. In our partnership we developed a full aviation power plant licensed program in high school in the United Technical Center. And whereby a student, upon graduation from high school, would be a licensed power plant mechanic. Recently, we've had opportunities for jobs at work. So I called the guidance counselor and told him I would like to pursue hiring a young man or a young woman from that program. He called me back somewhat disappointed because out of the 14 students who passed that exam, there was no one who really wanted a job application. They were all going on to higher education.

Mr. President, there's a question. There's a stigma about vocational education and technical education and I believe there's a fear within parents and within teachers and within the community that perhaps business people and industrial people being involved in education might be self-serving. How can we best break down those walls?

THE PRESIDENT: The first thing we should be doing, in my opinion, is asserting that the dividing line between vocational education and academic education in the world of the future is an artificial dividing line. If anybody doubts that, they ought to just take a random tour of factories in America today and see how many factory workers there are running very complex machines with computer programs, and a thousand other examples that you well know.

I can only tell you what we have tried to do and what I think we should do. The reason I pushed the development of this school-to-work program when I became President is that I had seen the same sort of thing you were talking about, on the one hand, and on the other hand, I had seen young people who were in vocational programs very often not getting the level of vocational training they needed because it's much more sophisticated now.

So what we decided we ought to do is to bring the business community, in effect, into the schools and bring the students into the businesses, and let young people make up their minds and let young people who chose, in effect, a kind of vocational option to do it in a way that they would know was not closing future doors. If they decided they wanted to go to a four-year college later on or they decided they wanted to pursue a different career later on, they could do it.

That's the whole idea of school-to-work, is to set up a partnership between the employers in the community and the schools so that the idea of working and learning are -- these ideas are compatible, not two different things. And so that if young people decide they want to go into the workplace, they will have an adequate amount of training to be worth enough to you so that you will give them a decent income and they can earn more as

they go along, and they're not foreclosing the option of taking a different path if, after a few years, they want to go back and go to school.

I think that a lot of the things that I have to do involve, well, do we have the right program, you know, do we have the right kind of incentives to go to college. Well, a lot of it is just making sure we're thinking right about this because most of the decisions made every day by Americans are not made by anybody in government, they're made by all the rest of you. So it's the way we think about these problems very often that determines whether we accomplish them.

And if you look at the level of work being done at Northrop-Grumman and any number of other companies today, it is a very foolish and outdated idea to have this old-fashioned dividing line between this is academic and respectable, and this is vocational and not quite as good. We need to abolish the line, and that's what our School-to-Work program has tried to do.

MR. KITTLE: Mr. President, in closing, would you like to go back to that sample math question, give us the answer, and explain how the United States students are compared to students in other countries?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that means we're out of time. (Laughter.)

Let me tell you what we always do at these town meetings. I love these. I have not done one in a couple years, but if any of you have questions that you would like to have answered, if you will provide them to the superintendent here, he'll load them all up, send them to me, and I'll write you back, because I think if you come here with a question, you're entitled to get an answer. I wish we had more time.

But let's do the question, let's go back to this. Here's the 8th grade question, okay. If the car has a fuel tank that holds 15 gallons, and it uses 5 gallons every 100 miles, and it goes 250 miles, obviously it uses 12.5 gallons of fuel and there is 2.5 gallons left, and

that was question A.

But here is the stunning thing. Let's look at the results. Let's go to the next slide. Only 34 percent of American 8th graders got that question right. Fifty percent of Korean 8th graders got it right. Seventy percent of 8th graders in Singapore got it right. So if you lengthen the school year, maybe you should work on specific math skills.

This has nothing to do with IQ. Nearly 100 percent of all the brains in the world will process this problem. Do not worry about whether we can do this. This is not an issue of whether we can achieve this level of excellence. We can easily do this. We just haven't.

And when we deprive our children of the capacity to do this, then there are all kinds of other processes that they can't absorb and it blunts their capacity to learn later. So I want to see that number up at about 90, and the only way to do it is to try and to test it. And we can do it.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

1999 State of the
Union ~~excerpt~~

United States Capitol
Washington, D.C.

9:10 P.M. EST

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks to the pioneering leadership of all of you, we have the

lowest violent crime rate in a quarter century and the cleanest environment in a quarter century. America is a strong force for peace from Northern Ireland to Bosnia to the Middle East.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, in addition to saving Social Security and Medicare, I

propose a new pension initiative for retirement security in the 21st century. I propose that we use a little over 11 percent of the surplus to establish universal savings accounts -- USA accounts -- to give all Americans the means to save. With these new accounts Americans can invest as they choose and receive funds to match a portion of their savings, with extra help for those least able to save. USA accounts will help all Americans to share in our nation's wealth and to enjoy a more secure retirement. I ask you to support them. (Applause.)

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

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

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

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

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

Today we can say something we couldn't say six years ago: With tax credits and more affordable student loans, with more work-study grants and more Pell grants, with education IRAs and the new HOPE Scholarship tax cut that more than five million Americans will receive this year, we have finally opened the doors of college to all Americans.

(Applause.)

With our support, nearly every state has set higher academic standards for public schools, and a voluntary national test is being developed to measure the progress of our students. With over \$1 billion in discounts available this year, we are well on our way to our goal of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet.

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

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

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

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

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

Now, if you doubt this will work, just look at Chicago, which ended social promotion and made summer school mandatory for those who don't master the basics. Math and reading scores are up three years running -- with some of the biggest gains in some of the poorest neighborhoods. It will work, and we should do it. (Applause.)

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

Our budget includes \$200 million to help states turn around their own failing schools.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parents should never have to worry about choosing between their children and their work. Now, the Family and Medical Leave Act -- the very first bill I signed into law -- has now, since 1993, helped millions and millions of Americans to care for a newborn baby or an ailing relative without risking their jobs. I think it's time, with all the evidence that it has been so little burdensome to employers, to extend Family Leave to 10 million more Americans working for smaller companies. And I hope you will support it. (Applause.)

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

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

I think we ought to say to every American: You should have the right to know all your medical options -- not just the cheapest. If you need a specialist, you should have the right to see one. You have a right to the nearest emergency care if you're in an accident. These are things that we ought to say. And I think we ought to say, you should

have a right to keep your doctor during a period of treatment, whether it's a pregnancy or a chemotherapy treatment, or anything else. I believe this.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Smoking has cost taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars under Medicare and other programs. You know, the states have been right about this -- taxpayers shouldn't pay for the cost of lung cancer, emphysema and other smoking-related illnesses -- the tobacco companies should. So tonight I announce that the Justice Department is preparing a litigation plan to take the tobacco companies to court -- and with the funds we recover, to strengthen Medicare. (Applause.)

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

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

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

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

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

We must do more to bring the spark of private enterprise to every

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

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

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

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

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

We had one member of Congress stand up and applaud. (Laughter.) And we may have about that ratio out there applauding at home, in front of their television sets. But remember, this is a big, big problem. And we've been working hard on it. Already, we've made sure that the Social Security checks will come on time. (Applause.) But I want all the folks at home listening to this to know that we need every state and local government, every business, large and small, to work with us to make sure that this Y2K computer bug will be remembered as the last headache of the 20th century, not the first crisis of the 21st. (Applause.)

For our own prosperity, we must support economic growth abroad. You know, until recently, a third of our economic growth came from

exports. But over the past year and a half, financial turmoil overseas has put that growth at risk. Today, much of the world is in recession, with Asia hit especially hard. This is the most serious financial crisis in half a century. To meet it, the United States and other nations have reduced interest rates and strengthened the International Monetary Fund. And while the turmoil is not over, we have worked very hard with other nations to contain it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We must help all manufacturers hit hard by the present crisis with loan guarantees and other incentives to increase American exports by nearly \$2 billion. I'd like to believe we can achieve a new consensus

on trade, based on these principles. And I ask the Congress again to join me in this common approach and to give the President the trade authority long used -- and now overdue and necessary -- to advance our prosperity in the 21st century. (Applause.)

Tonight, I issue a call to the nations of the world to join the United States in a new round of global trade negotiations to expand exports of services, manufacturers and farm products. Tonight I say we will work with the International Labor Organization on a new initiative

to raise labor standards around the world. And this year, we will lead the international community to conclude a treaty to ban abusive child labor everywhere in the world. (Applause.)

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

You know, no nation in history has had the opportunity and the responsibility we now have to shape a world that is more peaceful, more secure, more free. All Americans can be proud that our leadership helped to bring peace in Northern Ireland. All Americans can be proud that our leadership has put Bosnia on the path to peace. And with our NATO allies, we are pressing the Serbian government to stop its brutal repression in Kosovo -- (Applause.) -- to bring those responsible to justice, and to give the people of Kosovo the self-government they deserve.

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

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

lead. (Applause.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Captain Taliaferro. (Applause.)

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

We are the heirs of a legacy of bravery represented in every

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

The new century demands new partnerships for peace and security. The United Nations plays a crucial role, with allies sharing burdens America might otherwise bear alone. America needs a strong and effective U.N. I want to work with this new Congress to pay our dues and our debts. (Applause.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We must do more to keep our schools the safest places in our communities. Last year, every American was horrified and heartbroken by the tragic killings in Jonesboro, Paducah, Pearl, Edinboro, Springfield. We were deeply moved by the courageous parents now working to keep guns out of the hands of children and to make other efforts so that other parents don't have to live through their loss.

After she lost her daughter, Suzann Wilson of Jonesboro, Arkansas, came here to the White House with a powerful plea. She said, "Please, please, for the sake of your children, lock up your gun. Don't let what

happened in Jonesboro happen in your town." It's a message she is passionately advocating every day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our new immigrants must be part of our One America. After all, they're revitalizing our cities, they're energizing our culture, they're building up our economy. We have a responsibility to make them welcome

here; and they have a responsibility to enter the mainstream of American life. That means learning English and learning about our democratic system of government. There are now long waiting lines of immigrants that are trying to do just that. Therefore, our budget significantly expands our efforts to help them meet their responsibility. I hope you will support it. (Applause.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're now at the end of a century when generation after generation of Americans answered the call to greatness, overcoming Depression, lifting up the dispossessed, bringing down barriers to racial prejudice, building the largest middle class in history, winning two world wars and the "long twilight struggle" of the Cold War. We must all be profoundly grateful for the magnificent achievement of our forbearers in this century.

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

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

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

Thank you and good evening.

END

10:27 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 29, 1998

Statement by the President

I am delighted that the Senate today passed the Higher Education Amendments of 1998. This legislation marks an important step forward in my effort to help more Americans enter the doors of college. In today's global economy, what you earn depends on what you learn. This bill will make it easier for millions of Americans to get the higher education they need to succeed in the global economy. It also demonstrates how we can make progress on education policy when we choose bipartisan cooperation over division.

By adopting the new low interest rate for student loans we proposed last winter, this bill will save American students and their families billions of dollars in interest payments. But this bill does much more to help all Americans go to college. It responds to the challenge I issued in the State of the Union to create a 'High Hopes' initiative, where colleges reach down to middle school students in high-poverty areas to give them the support they need to be ready for higher education; incorporates our ideas on recruiting and training top-notch teachers for our public schools; builds on our efforts to deploy cutting-edge technology so that our students can learn anytime, anywhere; and modernizes the delivery of student aid by creating the government's first-ever Performance Based Organization, a recommendation made by the Vice President's National Performance Review.

I look forward to signing this bill into law, and I urge Congress to provide the accompanying funding for these new critical initiatives so that they can work effectively to give America's students the quality education they deserve.

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Press release on
higher education
amendment

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 22, 1994

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT CLINTON
ON PASSAGE OF SCHOOL-TO-WORK
LEGISLATION

I am gratified by today's final passage of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. I am particularly pleased that this vital economic opportunity legislation passed with such broad bipartisan support.

This legislation will help millions of our young people enter the middle class and secure the American dream for themselves and their families. It will give them the opportunity to receive advanced, academically rigorous technical training. And it will help them obtain the knowledge and skills they need to get jobs that pay well and offer real chances for career advancement.

School-to-Work is central to our efforts to guarantee lifetime learning for every citizen. In a rapidly changing world economy, what you earn increasingly depends on what you learn. We are putting in place an ambitious agenda to prepare our people. Last year Congress enacted my proposal to make college loans more affordable for middle class students. Just three weeks ago, I signed into law the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which set national educational standards. And by the end of this year, I look forward to signing legislation that will reform and expand Head Start, reconfigure federal aid to elementary and secondary education, and transform our outmoded unemployment system into a world-class reemployment system.

This is a time of real ferment, and real achievement, for America's workers and students. Working together, we can continue to break gridlock and build new opportunities for American families to prosper in a rapidly changing economy.

press release on
school-to-work
legislation

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Park City, Utah)

For Immediate Release

March 1, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN RADIO ACTUALITY ON "READ ACROSS AMERICA"

THE PRESIDENT: The best and most enjoyable way for children to open their minds is by opening a book. This Tuesday, America will celebrate "Read Across America" Day. More than one million people -- from baseball star Cal Ripken, Jr., to the sailors of the USS Saipan -- will share the joy of reading with children in every part of our country. I encourage all caring adults to get involved. Read to children on "Read Across America" Day -- and read to them every day. Together, we can make our children the best readers in the world.

END

Sound of this actuality can be obtained by calling The White House Actuality Line at 202-456-5671.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 23, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILD CARE

President + First
Lady on Child Care

The East Room

10:00 A.M. EDT

* * * * *

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Welcome to the White House. Thank you very much, Kathy Carliner, for your remarkable statement. And I thought you were very good in the film.

Rob

Reiner wants to give you a screen test. (Laughter.)

I am so happy to see all of you here. There are many people here who might well be introduced, but

I think I must start with the people who are terribly important to whether we will be able to fully achieve our part of the great agenda we are going to lay out today -- the members of Congress who

are here. And I'd like to call their names, and then when I finish, ask them all to stand.

Senator Herb Kohl, who sponsored legislation on child care; Senator Jack Reed; Congressman Bill

Clay; Congressman Sandy Levin; Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro; Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey;

Congresswoman Sue Kelly; Congresswoman Maxine Waters; Congressman Xavier Becerra; and Congressman Nick Lampson. Would the members of Congress who are here please stand. Thank you for coming. (Applause.)

I'd also like to thank my longtime friend -- Hillary and I have been friends of Governor Jim Hunt and

his wife, Carolyn, who are here, for almost 20 years now. And I think Governor Romer is here or on

his way. Mayor Clever, we're glad to see you. And John Sweeney, the head of the AFL-CIO, and others who have come to be with us today, I thank you very much.

This is a happy day at the White House, first for all the people in the administration and all those who

have worked with them for months and months and months to help this day come to pass; and

second, and even more important, from my point of view, this is a happy day because I have been listening to the First Lady talk about this for more than 25 years now -- (laughter) -- and it may be that I will finally be able to participate in at least a small fraction of what I have been told for a long time I should be doing. (Laughter.) And I say that in good humor, but also with great seriousness.

This is an anniversary of sorts for me. It was six years ago today as a newly-announced candidate for President that I went back to my alma mater at Georgetown and began a series of three speeches outlining what I thought America ought to look like in the 21st century and what I thought we would have to do to create a country in which everyone had an opportunity, everyone was expected to be a responsible citizen, and where we came together across all the lines that divide us into one community.

There are many things that are necessary for that to be done, but clearly two of them are, first, people in this country have to be able to succeed at work and at home in raising their children. And if we put people in the position of essentially having to choose one over the other, our country is going to be profoundly weakened. Obviously, if people are worried sick about their children, and they fail at work, it's not just individual firms, it's the economic fabric and strength of the country that is weakened. Far more important, if people fail at home, they have failed in our most important job, and our most solemn responsibility.

Second, we'll never be the kind of country we ought to be unless we believe that every child counts and that every child ought to have a chance to make the most of his or her God-given abilities.

That's why we're here today -- to examine where we are and what we still have to do. And what we still have to do is quite a lot, to make sure we live by what we believe when we say that all parents should be able to succeed at home and at work and that every child counts. No parent should ever have to choose between work and family; between earning a decent wage and caring for a child. Especially in this day and age when most parents work, nothing is more important, as you have just heard Kathy Carliner say, than finding child care that is affordable, accessible, and safe. It is America's next great frontier, in strengthening our families and our future.

As the Catholic Conference has noted, no government can love a child and no policy can substitute for a family's care. But there is much that we can do to help parents do their duty to their children. From my days as governor of Arkansas to my service as President, strengthening families has been a central goal of what I have worked on. I'm very proud that the first bill I had the opportunity to sign into law as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act, so that no parent has to choose between caring for a child or keeping a job when a family member is ill.

The expanded earned income tax credit helps to ensure that parents who work don't have to raise their children in poverty. No one who is out there working full-time with children should have to worry about that. Expanded Head Start programs are serving more families than ever before. We've collected record sums of child support enforcement. The historic balanced budget I signed this summer provides a \$500-per-child tax credit and helps parents to pay for their children's college education through IRAs, expanded loans and Pell Grants, the HOPE Scholarship and other tax credits.

The Congress has before it now a program of Secretary Riley's called 21st Century Community Schools in which we ask for funds to help our states keep our schools open after classroom hours for children who have no place else to go and need that environment.

We've also made some progress on child care. Since 1993, child care assistance has increased by 70 percent to help families pay for nearly a million children. Last year in the welfare reform debate, we fought and won the battle to expand child care assistance by \$4 billion over the next six years, giving states an unprecedented opportunity to lead, to innovate in efforts to make child care more affordable.

But we have to do more. With more families required to rely on two incomes to make ends meet, with more single-parent families than ever, more young children are left in the care of others even in their earliest years. And as the First Lady said, we learned at our Conference on Early Childhood and the Brain, that's when children develop or fail to develop capacities that will shape the entire rest of their lives. It's also true that more and more school children are returning to empty homes after school.

The first thing we have to do is to make it possible for parents to spend time with their children whenever possible. That's why I hope the Congress will vote to expand the Family and Medical Leave law so that parents at least can take some time off for their children's medical appointments,

teacher conferences and other basic duties. And I support flex-time laws that will allow workers to choose between receiving overtime in pay or in time off with their families.

But during those times when children can't be with their parents, they must get care that keeps them safe and that helps them to learn and grow. As we all know, too often that isn't the case. Too often, child care is unaffordable, inaccessible and, sometimes, even unsafe. The cost, as Hillary said, strains millions of family budgets. And government assistance meets just about a quarter of the need. Even for those who can afford it, sometimes good care is hard to find, as Kathy said in her remarks. Waiting lists sometimes takes months or years to move, forcing many parents to cobble together unstable arrangements.

The shortage of care puts older children at risk, as well. Five million of them between the ages of five and 14 are left to fend for themselves after school. And as they get older, that increases the chances that they'll be exposed to drugs, tobacco and crime.

Finally, studies have shown that too many child care facilities are literally unsafe. The tragedies that have befallen families who depended on child care continue to make headlines all across our nation.

This conference is an important step forward in addressing all these issues. What we learn today should spur us on to find ways to help parents, all parents, afford safe, affordable, high quality child care, whether it's at home, a child care center or a neighbor's house.

In the coming months, our administration will develop a plan to be unveiled at the next State of the Union, to improve access and affordability, and to help to ensure the safety of child care in America.

In the meantime, I want to announce four specific things we can do right now.

First, I'm asking Congress to establish a new scholarship fund for child care providers.
(Applause.)

Too many care-givers don't have the training they need to provide the best possible care. Those who do have training are rarely compensated with higher wages. The scholarship program I propose will help students earn their degrees as long as they remain in the child care field for at least a year, and it will ensure that care-givers who complete their training will receive a bonus or a raise.

Second, we have to weed out the people who have no business taking care of our children in the first place. I am transmitting to Congress the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact, which will make background checks on child care providers easier and more effective by eliminating state barriers to sharing criminal histories for this specific purpose. I urge Congress to pass and states to ratify this legislation.

Third, I've asked Secretary Rubin to oversee a working group on child care, composed primarily of business leaders working with labor and community representatives to find ways more businesses can provide child care or help their employees afford high quality child care. And again, I thank John Sweeney for his important support of this initiative. (Applause.) In some ways the most gripping part of that film we saw was the father talking about how he was just consumed with worry at work. No parent should ever have to go through that.

Finally, we must use community service to strengthen and expand access to after-school programs. Today, the Corporation for National Service through its To Learn and Grow Initiative will pledge to help after-school programs all across our country to use volunteers to provide better care to children. It is releasing a how-to manual for groups who want to incorporate community service into after-school programs. And I think that, Secretary Riley, if we can win in our little budget battle here on the 21 century community schools, then together, we can do some real good out there on this issue.

My friends, for centuries, over two now, the American Dream has represented a compact that those who work hard and play by the rules should be able to build better lives for themselves and for their children. In this time, and even more into the future, child care that is too expensive, unsafe or unavailable will be a very stubborn obstacle to realizing that dream. So let us commit ourselves to clearing the obstacle, to helping parents fulfill their most sacred duty, to keeping the American Dream alive for them and most important, for their children.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

* * * * *

way people view things, and then there is the way a lot of things around here work. And so I don't—anybody that's ever been through it knows that's true.

You're all smiling because you think, I wonder if the President made a mistake by committing the truth in that last remark. I can see you all smiling and thinking that. [Laughter] So all I can tell you is, I feel good about where we are on it. We're going to close on it in a month, and we're excited about it. And if we change the financing, we'll let you know.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Larry Klayman, chairman, Judicial Watch, Inc.; former Chief of Staff to the President Erskine B. Bowles; former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin; and Terence McAuliffe, loan guarantor of the First Family's residence Chappaqua, NY.

Remarks at the National Education Summit in Palisades, New York September 30, 1999

Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Governors, education leaders, business leaders. I am delighted to be here. I thank my good friend, Governor Hunt, for his remarks. This year marks the 20-year anniversary from the time you and Secretary Riley and I started working together on education.

I want to thank Governor Thompson for his interest in this, and so many other issues. Tommy Thompson is the first Governor who told me that he thought that he could really move, literally, every able-bodied welfare recipient in Wisconsin to work. And I think they've had a 91 percent drop in the rolls. He nearly got it done. Congratulations, that's an amazing achievement.

And I want to especially thank Lou Gerstner and all the business leaders here, because you kept the idea of the summit alive and understood the importance of consistent and systematic followup with the Governors, with the educators. I am very grateful to you for doing this. Most people like you do a project like this for a year or 2 and then they

forget it and go on to something else. And you haven't done it, and I'm very grateful.

And for all of you who were here 3½ years ago, who stayed involved in this, I thank you.

Governor Hunt—I was watching him on the monitor outside—talked about the issuance of the "Nation At Risk" report 16 years ago, the meeting we had 15 years ago. The first National Education Summit was in Charlottesville 10 years ago this week. And some of us were there then. President Bush, his Education Department, education leaders from around the country, we were all together. And we came together to embrace the concept and specifics of national education goals.

At the second summit, here in Palisades 3½ years ago, we supported the idea that every State should set standards. At this third summit I hope we will embrace with equal fervor the idea of accountability, for only by holding educators, schools, students, and ourselves accountable for meeting the standards we have set will we reach the goals we seek.

We have made significant progress, particularly in the ideas governing the way we look at this. More and more we're leaving behind the old divisions between one side saying "We need more money," and the other side saying "We shouldn't invest any more money in our public schools, it's hopeless." By and large, there is a new consensus for greater investment and greater accountability, greater investment and higher standards and higher quality teachers to help students reach the standards; holding the schools accountable for the results. That's the agenda of Achieve, the agenda of our administration, clearly the right agenda for the United States.

I think it is another mark of progress and something that many of you in this room can feel profoundly both proud of and grateful for, that 10 full years after Charlottesville and now more than 16 years after the issuance of the "Nation at Risk" report, there is still a passionate sense of national urgency about school reform and about lifting education standards. And there are people who get up every day full of energy about it, not cynical, not skeptical, not jaded, not tired, still eager to learn. People in Governors' offices, people

in the schools of our country, business leaders, education leaders of all kind.

This is quite an astonishing thing. You cannot think of a single other issue that has had this long a life at this level of intense commitment. And I think it is a tribute to the love of the American people for their children, a tribute to the understanding of the American people of the importance of education in the global economy, and a sense that we know that we have both the largest and the most diverse student population in our history.

But if you just think about how people get tired of political issues, how everybody is supposed to want to read something new in the paper or seeing something new on the evening news, month-in and month-out, and you think about how long ago it was when Governor Caperton there decided to make all of his elementary students computer literate; how long Governor Engler has been in office; how long ago it was that Secretary Riley and Governor Hunt and I started fooling with all this—and the country is as hot to do the right thing, to improve the education of our children today as it was the day after the “Nation At Risk” report was issued. And that’s a great source of comfort to me, and reassurance. And the business leaders, the educators, and the political leaders here in this room and like-minded people throughout this country deserve a lot of credit for that.

When I came to Washington 6½ years ago, all of you know that the number one problem I had to deal with was the deficit, because we quadrupled the debt in 4 years, interest rates were high, the economy was stagnant. We had to cut hundreds of programs, and we were determined to try to do it in a way that would increase our investment, not decrease our investment in education at the national level, and to do it in a way that, spearheaded by Secretary Riley, to give you more flexibility, but also to focus on the pressure points of reform that would likely give us the greatest returns.

I am very grateful that we have seen our deficit of \$290 billion turn into a surplus of \$115 billion. This year we’ll have the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. And today we learned we have the lowest rate of poverty

in America in 20 years. I am very grateful for that. But I’m also grateful that during this period we were able to early double the Federal investment in education, to help you provide your children and your schools with more of the tools they need. We’ve increased early childhood investment through Head Start. We’ve opened the doors of college wide by basically modeling a national version of Georgia’s HOPE scholarship and providing tax credits for beyond the first 2 years of high school.

We have increased Pell grants and established education IRA’s. We’ve begun to organize an army of tutors. We now have a thousand colleges and universities, I believe in every State in the country, involving themselves in America Reads, to try to make sure all 8-year-olds can read when they finish the third grade.

We’ve made an enormous amount of progress, and a lot of you have been active on this, in hooking up every school and library in the country to the Internet and with the e-rate making sure that the poorest schools can afford to participate in the information superhighway.

Last fall we fought for and won a big bipartisan consensus to make a downpayment of 30,000 teachers, on getting 100,000 more teachers out in the country to lower class sizes in the early grades. And we have supported a huge increase in the number of charter schools in America. When I became President in January of ‘93 there was only one charter school in the whole country, in the State of Minnesota. There are now 1,300.

We’re in New York; the New York Legislature, I think, just authorized the establishment of the first charter schools here. In California, they just took the cap off the number of charter schools that they could have. We still have a lot of interest in magnet schools and other public school choice initiatives along with the other debates on this subject. But I think that we are well on our way to having 3,000 charter schools in the United States by next year, which is the goal that I set for our administration when we started down this path 6 years ago.

Now, in addition to what we’ve done, what’s more important is what you’ve done and what the country’s done. We have made

truly remarkable progress in the standards movement, thanks in no small measure to the leadership of Governors and those of you who gathered here 3½ years ago. Our Goals 2000 legislation and the reforms in Title I we made have supported that. Today, almost every State has standards for what children should know in English, math, science, history, social studies. Next year, virtually every State will be testing students to see if they're meeting the standards.

Now, that is all very good news. My friend, Hugh Price, who is sitting back there to my left, leader of the Urban League, recently observed that people didn't talk much about standards and test scores 50 years ago because the output of the schools, whether it was good, bad or indifferent, more or less matched with the demands of a blue collar economy that needed strong backs more than well-developed minds. The problem now is that the economy has changed much faster than the schools.

People used to say, "You know, the schools just aren't what they used to be." The problem may be that too many of our schools are too much like they used to be, but the world the children move out into is not at all as it used to be. And that, of course, is what a lot of you are trying to help to change.

Now, as we move into this period of not only having standards but having accountability—that is consequences for the failure to meet them—there will be people who will, first of all, be elated at the evidence of improvement, which you can see all over the country where such things have been done from California to Houston to Chicago to Dade County to many other places in the country. Then there will be those who will want to shrink back because they fear the adverse consequences of failure and many people really don't believe all kids can learn. I think it would be a mistake to give into those fears.

And one of the things that I would hope will come out of this summit, Lou, is that all of you, in encouraging accountability, which is, I know, something you believe in, ask people not to be afraid when there are consequences.

I just saw the results in New York City, where the first group of children have

gone—didn't score at the appropriate level. They went to summer school. Many that went to summer school are being prompted, but a few that went to summer school aren't, and all the ones that refused to go aren't.

And there may be some mistakes made. But as long as we send the message to these kids that "We're doing this for you. This doesn't mean there's something wrong with you, but we'll be hurting you worse if we tell you you're learning something when you're not. We'll be basically participating in a fraud which, ultimately, will cost you more personally, psychically and, of course, eventually financially, than any pain that comes in the moment."

But in order to do this, this whole issue will have to be really taken out of and kept out of the closet. Governors will have to look dead in the eye of some child that was held back and say, "That's okay, you can do it," and lift them up. We won't have to pretend that there will never be a moment of pain for anybody in any of this.

And similarly, business people and Governors will have to know that we have done everything we absolutely can to give every kid we can the chance not to be taken down by the system. It's one of the things that I liked about Chicago, where the summer school now for the children that don't make the grade is now the sixth biggest school district in the entire United States of America—the Chicago summer school, the sixth biggest school district in America. Why? Because they don't want to brand the kids as failures when the system didn't do for them what it should have.

And Secretary Riley and I have met with parents whose children have been through the system there, including parents of children who were held back and had to go to summer school. I have been into a poor neighborhood there where virtually all the kids had to go to summer school in a couple of the classes. And because they believed the system is honest and because they believe that the purpose of what is being done is not for some politician or educator to look tough or run up numbers in the polls or, say, have some easy sloganeering answer, but the purpose is to make sure these kids learn what they need to learn to have good lives, they

support it. They support the standards. They support the mandatory summer school. They support what's being done in the after-school programs.

And it will happen everywhere in America. But we all have to commit the truth about this. And we can't pretend there will never be any painful consequences. But where there are painful consequences, all the Governors can do a world of good by going into those schools and say, "I'm doing this because I want you to have a good life. I'm doing this because it's not too late for you. This is just the beginning of your life. I'm doing this because your teachers and your principals and your parents and the business leaders in this community, we care about your future, and we're going to make this work." And I hope we can do that.

Let me just say very quickly, I think we have to have these basic standards in every State, and we have to make it possible, as Achieve has recommended, not only know whether the standards are being met but to give the parents some comparative information about how children in other States and other nations are doing. I think we have to recommit ourselves to extra support.

And Congress, when I sent this Education Accountability Act to Congress, saying that school districts accepting Federal money must ensure that teachers know the subject they're teaching, have reasonable discipline codes, empower parents with report cards, have a strategy—and I think this is very important—to turn around failing schools or close them down and, finally, a strategy to end social promotion that empowers children who aren't making the grade through the after-school programs, the summer school programs, and all the rest.

Now, we're having a big argument in Washington on the budget today. I don't want to get into a partisan rerun of that, but let me just say this: We can have the kind of budget we need that will help you to do what you need to do without—and we can meet the budget targets without coming up short in education, whether it's for Head Start or more teachers or the initiative to help States build and modernize 6,000 new schools or the American Reads program or this Gear Up program, all of which the Con-

gress supported last year, by the way, to help mentor kids that are in trouble in junior high school, to try to get them into college by getting them over that rough patch. So I hope we can get that done.

I also wanted to say, emphasize something that I think is very important, our budget would provide \$200 million to help you turn around low-performing schools. I believe that it is not enough to say, no social promotion, strict accountability, and even summer school and after-school programs for kids, unless there is a strategy to turn around the low-performing schools. And I know that in North Carolina and in several other places where this has been done—I mentioned them earlier, Houston, Dade County, Chicago, and there are other places—but there is evidence now—we don't have to question this either—there is a lot of evidence that these low-performing schools can be turned around.

I went to an elementary school in Chicago, in the Robert Taylor housing project, where the reading scores had tripled and the math scores had doubled in 2 years. Were they on a low base? Yes. Were they where they ought to be? No. But does it prove you can turn things around, even in the most adverse circumstances? Absolutely. So I think that if we're going to have genuine accountability for standards, it is important that we have something to turn the schools around.

And again, I say—a lot of people in Congress don't want to adopt this accountability standard for Federal funds because they say that we shouldn't impose that on you. But I think all of you know that the five elements in the Federal bill were basically ideas we got straight out of local school districts and States. They weren't something that Dick Riley cooked up. It was something that the Education Department developed based on the proven experience and results of local school districts and States.

Finally, let me just give you something to feel good about again, at the end. In 1996, there were only 14 States with measurable standards. Today there are 50. That's the good news. Here's why you ought to focus on accountability. In 1996, there were only

11 States with systems that identify and sanction low-performing schools. Today there are only 16. This is the hard part.

But again, I say, we've got to give the schools the tools they need to do the job. And the Federal Government has an important role to play. We don't provide an enormous amount of the total funds for schools, but that amount was slipping for a while, and we got it going back up now. And I feel very strongly, as the Secretary of Education, that with the largest student population in history and with all this educational evidence about the benefits of smaller classes and with the imperative of ending the practice of social promotion, finishing the work of 100,000 teachers, helping you to build or remodel 6,000 schools so they'll be modern, and doing these other things are quite important.

Now, let me just make one other point. I'm encouraged by the movement to standards in the 3½ years since you had your last summit here, and you should be, too. That's a rather astonishing move. And it shows what can happen if you meet in an environment where you've got business and education and the political leadership working together, and Republicans and Democrats leave the party labels at the door, and everybody just works on what's good for the kids.

But this is the hard part. It's not an accident that we've gone from 16 to 50 standards and 11 to 16 in genuine accountability. It's hard. But you also can take a lot of pride in the fact that you have evidence, even in big urban areas with a lot of trouble, where this has worked. And the consequences are good.

Now, last February when the Governors were in the White House, I just noted that it took 100 years for laws mandating compulsory, free elementary education to spread from a few States to the whole Nation. When it comes to this accountability agenda, will we follow the model of the last 3½ years with standards and go from 16 to 50 in a hurry, or will we go back to the model of the earlier time? I think all of you know what we ought to do.

And I will say again, I think the fact that we have the largest number of children in our public schools in history, I think the fact that they are more diverse than ever before

in terms of their backgrounds and their languages is a godsend for us for the 21st century in a global society if, but only if, we prove not only that they can all learn but that we can teach them all. We know they can all learn from—you can do a brain scan and determine that. That's always been—that's the wrong question. The question is, can we teach them all, and are we prepared to do it, and are we prepared to have constructive compassion for their present difficulties by having genuine accountability and also heartfelt support.

The reason that there is still so much enthusiasm for all this after—10 years after the Charlottesville Summit, 16 years after the "Nation at Risk," 20 or 30 years after all the Southerners figured out that it's the only way to lift our States out of the dirt—is that everybody knows that deep down inside it's still the most important public work.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the Watson Room at the IBM Palisades Executive Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to North Carolina Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr.; Wisconsin Gov. Tommy G. Thompson; Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, IBM Corp.; former Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; Gov. John Engler of Michigan; and Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer, Urban League.

Memorandum on Counter-Drug Assistance to Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Panama
September 30, 1999

Presidential Determination No. 99-43

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation

Subject: Drawdown Under Section 506(a)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act to Provide Counter-Drug Assistance to Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Panama

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 506(a)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2318(a)(2) (the "Act"), I hereby determine