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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The Oval Office
JULY 22, 1996, 10:30 A.M. EDT

More than two hundred years ago, our country's Founders created the power of the Presidential veto -- to stand guard against the excesses of Congress, and to fulfill the promises of the Preamble to the Constitution: to establish liberty and justice, to promote the general welfare, and -- perhaps most important to our mission here today -- to insure domestic tranquillity and provide for the common defense. Our domestic tranquillity largely depends on the bravery of the men and women who wear the uniform of our local police forces. Those men and women routinely risk their lives to protect our homes, our families, and our children. Some of them are with us today.

[BRIEF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, EMPHASIS ON LOCAL.]

Some of the bravest officers are not here today. Their absence eloquently speaks to our purpose. Four years years ago, Bill Jones was an officer in the local police precinct of Anywhere USA. He believed in community policing. As he paroled his beat one night, he noticed an ongoing robbery at a local 7-11 convenience store and intervened. The robber, a teenage gang member not yet turned sixteen, was carrying a military-style assault weapon. When Officer Jones entered the store, the boy panicked, and in the wink of an eye, four people--Officer Jones and three others--were murdered in an unthinking hailstorm of bullets and shattered glass. His

widow, Susan Jones, is here today. And we honor her, and the memory of her husband.

[BRIEF RECOGNITION OF SUSAN JONES]

We stand here together in common cause, for today the courageous work of these men and women, and our shared values, are again under assault.

When I took office four years ago, the battle against violent crime was being lost. In too many communities, working families lived under virtual house arrest, as gangs and drug dealers ruled their streets. Guns were openly sold to children and career criminals from the backs of flatbed trucks. Violent crime was encroaching on our schools, our places of business, and even our backyards. Too often, our government talked tough on crime, but carried a small stick.

Our administration promised to do better, and we have. For the first time in nearly a decade, we have turned the tide in our war on crime. Rates of violent crime have dropped to record lows. Two years ago, we passed the toughest crime bill in American history; in cooperation with community organizations, that bill is putting 100,000 new police officers on the streets. We have enacted tougher penalties that put more criminals longer behind bars. Civility is gradually returning to our streets and neighborhoods. We pushed through the Brady Bill. Without impinging on the rights of law-abiding Americans to bear arms, it has prevented some 60,000 former felons, fugitives, and stalkers from purchasing guns. And in 1994, we won historic legislation that barred the manufacture, import, and sale of nineteen specific models of assault weapons whose sole purpose was to murder human beings in massive bursts of military-style gunfire. (It is one of these guns that killed Bill Jones.)

This lifesaving ban has already helped to reduce violent crime. It is supported by nearly every police organization in the country and by an overwhelming majority of Americans. They are right. And the sponsors of this bill are wrong. They would subordinate the rights of victims to those

of career criminals. And at a time when rates of violent juvenile crime are still climbing, they would effectively condone the popularity of these military-style assault weapons among gang members.

I have long said I will veto this bill and I will. It is the right thing to do. And it is the moral thing to do. It sends a message of strength and determination. It strikes a necessary balance between our rights as gunowners and hunters and our responsibilities to each other. It strengthens our domestic tranquility. And it will help insure that the blessings of liberty will be there for our children. Thank you.

(B1)

Statement by President William J. Clinton
In Vetoing the Repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban

[Acknowledgements: I want to thank Susan Jones for the remarkable courage she's shown, turning her personal pain into action to protect the American people. I can think of no more moving, no more appropriate, tribute to her husband, Officer Bill Jones. And, my thanks to the police officers and law enforcement representatives who have joined me today, the brave men and women who spend their lives -- and too often sacrifice their lives -- to save ours.]

Today, I am using my veto power to ensure that America does not lose any precious ground in our battle against crime. As Americans, we believe that every family, every child, every dedicated law enforcement officer should be able to live and work and reach their God-given potential free from the ugly shadow of violence.

Yet, when I came to office almost four years ago, our violent crime rate was far too high. We saw too many career criminals pouring out of prison and preying on our citizens. We saw too many children caught in the crossfire of gangs and drugs and violence -- unable to live and learn and play like all children should. And, we saw too many of our sacred guardians -- like Officer Bill Jones -- being outgunned by criminals wielding weapons of mass destruction.

I wanted to stop these tragedies. I wanted to take power away from the gangs and criminals and put it into the hands of police officers, into the hands of families, and into the hands of communities -- where it belongs. That's why one of the first things I did as President was to ask Congress to pass a Crime Bill that was tough, balanced and reflected the values of the American people. And, they did. Now, we're putting 100,000 police officers on the street. We're imposing tougher penalties. We're giving young people something to say "yes" to. And, we're taking assault weapons away from criminals and kicking them out of our communities.

These assault weapons have only one purpose -- to kill people. We banned 19 of them because it was the right thing to do, the smart thing to do. We banned them not to control guns, but to control crime. Today, there are fewer assault weapons traced to crime. Crime rates are down. Homicides are down. Americans are safer. We're moving forward. But, we still have a long way to go.

I am deeply disappointed that the Republican Congress passed a bill that violates our values, ignores the wishes of the vast majority of Americans and moves our nation backwards. From day one, I have said that if the Republican majority sends me a bill that repeals the assault weapons ban, I will veto it. And, today, I am.

The supporters of this bill claim that it takes away the rights of hunters. I've been hunting since I was a little boy and I've been keeping count. It's been two years since we passed the assault weapons ban and not one hunter has been forced to switch guns because of it. But, thanks to the Brady Bill, 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers who wanted guns are out of luck. Our nation is safer -- and we should be proud of that.

Today, with this pen, I am telling the American people that we will not back down even for a minute in our fight against crime. We will not let the special interests beat out the public interest. To our law-abiding citizens and the heroes who protect them, we say that we will continue to stand on the right side -- your side -- in the battle against crime and drugs and violence. We will continue to ensure that the scales of justice and the balance of power always point in your direction. We will continue to put law and order first. The criminals never take a break -- and neither can we.

This is not -- and should not -- be a partisan issue. This should not be a controversial issue. Today, I am vetoing this bill because it is time for all of us to move forward in unity to protect our values, our citizens, and our nation.

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The Veto of the Repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban Rose Garden Statement

Just two weeks ago I spoke to the nation about the State of our Union. I said then, and I say again today, that our country stands at a pivotal moment in history. A time of peace. A time of prosperity. A time when we've been blessed with the opportunity to plan for the future. When we can lay the groundwork for our destiny.

But I tell you this: America will not reach its heights, will not live up to its great potential, if our citizens are forced to live frightened lives. Two weeks ago I talked about my plan for American education, to raise standards and broaden opportunity for our nation's children. But we will not succeed in our efforts in education, nor in technology, nor in business, if to live in America means to accept the unacceptable: to live with the kind of violence that casts a dark shadow of fear over our young ones on their way to school and over our loved ones at work and over ourselves every day.

And that is why I'm here today, joined by some of the brave men and women who are on the front lines of the fight against crime. And joined by Susan Jones, the widow of Bill Jones, a police officer who was killed two years ago. Killed with an assault weapon during a hold up of a 7-11 store. We're all here because our security is being threatened today -- not by enemies abroad, but by special interest politics here at home.

I do not wield the veto pen often, but at this moment I hold it with utter resolve and I'm grateful for the opportunity to use it. I will veto the repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban. To do less as President would be to be less of a President.

Veto - 2

Our nation cannot afford to allow this repeal to stand. Not when we know that for over 15 years these guns have been the weapons of choice for drug traffickers, street gangs and paramilitary groups.

Not when we know that in the two years since the ban was passed, crimes committed with assault weapons -- the kind of crime that killed Officer Jones -- have been reduced by 18 percent.

Not when we know that serious crime dropped another three percent last year alone and that Americans are less afraid today than they have been for a long time.

Make no mistake about it: This is not a battle over hunting guns. Those are protected and are in no danger of being taken away. This ban is exclusively directed toward guns that are meant to kill people.

Throughout this country's history, the role and size of our government has been debated. But one thing has remained clear: If nothing else, government must exist to protect its citizens. If we fail in this we have failed entirely. I will not stand by and let us fail.

I will not let us fail because I believe in this country's success. I believe these next four years will be crucial in shaping our next fifty. In these coming years we will together build a foundation strong enough to support another great American century. A century that will be marked by peace abroad -- and by prosperity and security here at home.

We cannot go back to ever-rising rates of violent crime. We cannot go back to the free manufacturing and sale of deadly assault weapons. And as long as I am President, we will not go back.

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REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT IN VETOING
THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

THE ROSE GARDEN

2:15 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: The oath of office for the President of the United States is only thirty-five words long. Yet there is no charge so grave, no pledge so serious. Twice I have said those words. Twice I have put my hand on the Bible and promised to "preserve, protect and defend" our great nation. It is to keep that promise that I now veto the repeal of the assault weapons ban.

Our forefathers traveled many paths to reach this land. But they were united in goal: they all sought freedom. For 220 years the men who have held this office have fought for many things, but their greatest fight---with foreign foe, with domestic ills, within their own souls---has been saved in defense of our freedom.

But there can be no freedom where there is fear. There is no freedom when parents are afraid to drop their children off at school, worried that someone will maim and kill them the way a gunman used an AK-47 to murder five elementary school kids a few years ago. There is no freedom when neighbors feel safer hiding behind closed doors rather than out in each other's yards for fear of gun spray from a gang member's TEK-9. Seems like you can't pick up the paper without reading about some innocent person killed because they were standing in the wrong place during a drive-by shooting. There is no freedom when police officers like Officer Bill Jones, whose widow Susan is standing here beside me, get mowed down in 7-11s by gang members with assault weapons. If we're not careful our kids are going to start thinking its better, at least safer, to be the robber when they play cops and robbers.

In the past four years we have worked hard to free Americans from fear. We put 100,000 more police officers in our communities. We told the criminals, "Three strikes? You're out." Drug dealers know that if they hurt us, we will hunt them. Sexual predators know that if they harm our children, we will give them no peace. And we banned weapons whose sole purpose is rapid-fire death.

We have seen our labor bear fruit: murders are down, rapes are down, robberies are down. Our youth are getting the message and juvenile crime, which all the experts said was about to explode, is down. America is safer and we can not, we will not, allow anyone to force us to go back to fear. To preserve, protect and defend this country from the violence that has torn apart so many communities, so many families, I will not sign this bill.

I could spend more time explaining why I have made this decision. But I think my reasons are clear and they have the help of common sense. If there is anyone we should ask for explanations, it is the men and women who overturned this law and who will now try to override my veto.

And that is what I am asking you to do now. I want these officers and their loved ones, the teachers and the convenience store owners, the parents and the elderly to do just that. Call up your Congressmen and your Senators and ask them why you should have to be afraid to let your children play in the yard. Make them tell you why you should be afraid to walk to the mailbox to get your Social Security check or to see customers come into your store.

They might try to tell you its to protect your freedom to bear arms and hunt. Well, the assault weapons ban *protects* 650 hunting weapons. I can show you the widows, the devastated parents and children; they can't show you one hunter who was hindered by this ban. If they give you this defense, ask them why they aren't more concerned with protecting your right to a long and happy life.

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SPEECH 1 -- VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The Assault Weapons Ban that law enforcement officers hoped would give them a measure of protection against being out-gunned was repealed by some lawmakers more attuned to the needs of narrow-minded special interests. Well, when it comes to public safety, I stand with these men and women in blue -- I am more concerned with the well-being of the officers who have to stare down the barrel, or clean up the wake, of an assault weapon than some folks who think emptying a clip in a few seconds amounts to sport.

Last month, America saw what these frontline officers encounter far too often, when two would-be bank robbers cut a swath of destruction through a Los Angeles neighborhood. Even from the safety of our living rooms, America shuddered as two gunmen used an array of assault weapons to hold off police, then simply slipped in a new clip and resumed sweeping the streets in a hail of mayhem. That no police or civilians were killed was providence. That the police needed the help of a nearby gun shop owner to stand a fighting chance was terrifying.

The scene in Los Angeles was caught on camera, and the true destructive capacity of assault weapons was made perfectly clear. But out of the camera's eye, officers face down assault weapons every day, and too often are not as fortunate as those in Los Angeles. Susan Jones's husband Bill was an officer killed in the line of duty by a gang member sticking up a 7-11 store with an assault weapon. Facing a gun that shot some 30 rounds without a pause, he literally never had a chance.

Assault weapons exist for one reason -- to outgun law enforcement and to do as much damage as possible. That is why I am vetoing this ill-thought repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban -- to give police officers, sheriffs, state troopers, and every man and woman who puts their life on the line to protect us a fighting chance. I refuse to accept any argument that assault weapons are for sport; and the people pushing that line are the same ones who fought the ban on teflon-tipped bullets -- "cop killer" bullets intended to pierce bullet proof vests -- and wanted

plastic handguns that wouldn't show up on airport x-ray machines to be OKed for sale.

I'm sorry, but banning assault weapons is not an attack on sportsmen or hunters or homeowners. It is an attempt to give cops any and every advantage, and to start making it tougher for gangs, drug dealers, and would-be killers to get their hands on guns that are made to cut down anyone and anything in their way, as indiscriminately as possible.

I know the headlines still horrify us with vicious crimes and the brazenness of criminals. But the truth is, America is a safer place today, period. Serious crime has declined for five straight years. We've put more officers in the beat, barred felons from buying guns and kept handguns out of reach of anyone convicted of domestic violence, and we've toughened drug sentencing laws. These are the steps that turn the tide on crime -- and now is the time to turn that tide into an onslaught, and continue making every street, neighborhood, and community a safe place for families, for seniors, for businesses, and for every day life.

This veto is in the hope that the officers with us today do not have to gather in their dress blues at the funeral of a fellow officer outgunned by an assault weapon. My wish is that leaders in Congress come to see the Assault Weapons Ban from the same perspective. Thank you.

No president takes his power to veto legislation lightly. But at times that executive decision has to be made to protect the values we have set for ourselves as a nation. It is in that spirit that I come before you today, joined by these fine men and women who represent America's law enforcement community, to make right what is clearly wrong.

Four years ago, when I first took the oath of office as president, many Americans believed crime and violence had taken a strangle hold on their neighborhoods. People abandoned the streets to criminals. They sat inside their homes, only venturing out when absolutely necessary, and at those times were in constant fear of a senseless attack.

We began correcting that intolerable situation by putting together a comprehensive plan to fight crime that includes hiring and training 100,000 new community police officers, developing innovative programs to keep young people out of gangs and away from drugs, and supporting landmark legislation such as the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

Our strategies are working. Serious crime statistics have gone down each of the last five years. That's the longest decline in more than 25 years. Murders, rapes, robberies -- all down. Even the violent crime rate among young people is finally beginning to recede.

But despite the overwhelming evidence that this approach has been successful, there have been misguided attempts to scuttle portions of our crime-fighting strategy even as we try to have other needed elements added to it.

Congress has been convinced that it should repeal the assault weapons ban. But we standing before you today cannot allow that to happen. We cannot forget that Officer Bill Jones, whose widow Susan stands with us today, was shot to death by a gang member who used one of the very assault weapons this legislation seeks to ban.

We remember the San Francisco gunman who used two TEK-9s to kill eight people. We remember the five elementary school children who were murdered by a gunman who used an Ak-47. We cannot help but think of other officers who, like Bill Jones, will die in the line of duty if the assault weapons ban isn't kept intact.

The arguments of those who oppose the assault weapons ban are specious. You all remember how they claimed this legislation would allow the government to take away hunters' rifles. As someone who fired his first gun when he was 12 years old, I never would have supported anything that infringed on the rights of America's sportsmen and women.

And that has not happened. The assault weapons ban protected more than 650 hunting weapons. Its detractors should have applauded the first explicit protection of hunting by the federal government. But in their myopia, they could not see the truth.

Not a single hunter has been denied a weapon. Instead, the Brady Bill has thwarted more than 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers who tried to get their hands on a gun. We need to do more to reduce the ability of criminals to get guns. It's not time to retreat.

The men and women here with me today are the police officers and law enforcement agents who put their lives on the line to protect us. It is dangerous work. Too often, it is thankless as well.

We ask the police to keep us safe. We ought to do whatever we can to help keep them safe while they do their job. These police officers are asking their government to outlaw weapons that serve no function other than to maim or destroy human life. I'm vetoing the repeal of the assault weapons ban because that's not too much to ask.

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

(G1)

Four years ago, we started fighting crime in America with tough, new ideas. We gave our communities, our families and our police the tools they needed to create safe streets in safe neighborhoods.

We began putting 100,000 new community police officers on the street. We made "three strikes and you're out" the law of the land. We denied handguns to 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers under the Brady Bill. We expanded the death penalty.

And we banned 19 deadly assault rifles.

We have made unprecedented progress in our quest for communities controlling our streets, not the streets controlling our communities.

The crime rate has gone down five years in a row. Murders, rapes and robberies are down.

Now, as we continue to prepare our children and our nation for the century ahead, we must build on this record of taking criminals, drugs and guns off our streets. We must build on this monument to civility, not tear it down.

Today I am vetoing a bill that would repeal the ban on assault weapons. But more than that, it would repeal the progress we've made in fighting crime and violence.

I veto this bill with a pen and the determination that no child will again stare down the barrel of an AK-47, no man will again lose his wife to a TEK-9, no police officer will again die in the line of duty because we didn't have the courage to stand for what's right.

I veto this bill in the name of Officer Bill Jones. Killed by a gang member wielding an assault weapon. Officer Jones spent his life protecting our children and defending our streets. The strength and courage and spirit that were Officer Jones will live on if we remain responsible for the safety of our schools, our families and our neighborhoods.

Today we are honored with the presence of Officer Jones' wife, Susan. After I use this pen in the hope of saving lives, I would like to give it to you, Susan, in memory of the man who gave his life.

We are also honored to be joined by men and women who represent law enforcement in America today. You don't read about them in the papers. They patrol the communities where citizens walk the streets by day and sleep peacefully at night. They don't always get the recognition they deserve, but they earn our gratitude every day.

There are those who don't want me to veto this bill. They say that banning assault weapons is the first step in banning all guns. I challenge those critics to look at the facts. We banned the rifles that have no other purpose - none - than to cause injury in the hands of crazed gunmen.

And this is not about hunting. I have worked hard to protect the rights of sports groups, and many sportsmen and women support the ban.

We should not let the extreme views of some drown out the sensible strategy we crafted with one shining voice. We can preserve our sport and protect our children.

Today I veto this bill to keep us on our tough new track of fighting crime and drugs and guns - to keep us moving forward with a clear vision of safe streets and safe schools and a clear conscience of doing what is right for our children and for our future.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT IN VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

Three years ago, Congress passed and I signed a tough and smart Crime Bill that took a number of important steps toward making our streets, schools and homes safer. Part of that Crime Bill was a ban on 19 deadly assault weapons that had become the tools of criminals and terrorists.

Yesterday, Congress took an enormous step backward in the war on crime, by repealing the Assault Weapons Ban. They were wrong to do it, and I have vowed to stop it. Today, I am reversing a serious congressional mistake by vetoing Congress' repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban.

Those in Congress who favored the repeal of the ban took up that tired old line about how banning these combat-style weapons infringed on the rights of sportsman to own and use guns. That's just wrong -- the Assault Weapons Ban explicitly protects 650 specific types of hunting and sporting weapons.

Invoking the rights of sportsmen is a transparent smokescreen. I started hunting when I was twelve years old, and no one can show me any use for an AK-47 in the woods. The 19 assault weapons banned under the Crime Bill are not used for hunting quail or deer -- they're used for hunting people.

Joining me today are a group of brave men and women who face the threat of heavily armed hunters on the street. Our police officers on the front lines of the war on crime know just how deadly assault weapons can be in the hands of a gang member, a crack addict or a deranged killer. They see first hand the dangers that these weapons pose to our families, our children and those sworn to protect us.

Also with me today is a woman who, along with her family, has paid a horrible price for the easy availability of assault weapons. Susan Jones is the widow of Officer Bill Jones, a police officer in Cleveland. Officer Jones was in uniform and on duty one night when he responded to a call of a robbery at a local convenience store. A gang member armed with an AK-47 assault weapon gunned down Bill Jones, and now Susan is raising their two beautiful children by herself.

The 1994 Crime Bill went a long way toward shutting down the supply of these guns and keeping them out of the hands of criminals like the one that killed Bill Jones. The Assault Weapons Ban, along with the Brady Bill, funding for 100,000 new community police officers, and tough new penalties for crime and drugs made up our comprehensive plan to fight crime.

That plan is working. Serious crime has dropped for five years in a row, which is the longest decline in 25 years. With crime on the run, the last thing that we should do is turn the pressure down and help put deadly weapons back into the hands of criminals.

Yet with its repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban, Congress has passed a bill that would do just that, reversing some of the progress we have made by resuming the flow of assault weapons onto the streets of America.

The Assault Weapons Ban is important and effective, and it infringes no one's constitutional rights. I will not allow a wrong-headed campaign orchestrated by special interests to make our communities more dangerous. Those protected by the Assault Weapons Ban -- our families and our law enforcement officers -- need and want us to keep the ban in place. With this veto, that is what I will do.



Short Statement for Veto of Repeal of Assault Weapons Ban

WORD COUNT: 591

Thank you. And thank you very much to the police officers and law enforcement representatives who have joined me today to show their support for the Assault Weapons Ban. You risk your lives everyday to make our neighborhoods safe, and we need to make sure that you're not outgunned on our streets.

I especially want to thank Susan Jones for joining us. Susan is the widow of Officer Bill Jones, a policeman who was killed by a gang member with an assault weapon during a 7-11 hold up. Undeniably, Bill Jones is a hero, and that reminds me of the words of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy."

Bill's death was an individual tragedy, but I'm here today to prevent a national tragedy-- the repeal of the ban on assault weapons. Recently, Congress took the side of the gun lobby; they put a special interest above the public interest. But repealing the Assault Weapons Ban is unwise, unnecessary--and deadly.

It's unwise to repeal the ban because it's working. Before the ban, the number of assault weapons involved in crimes was rising steadily. But in just the first year since the ban took effect, the number of assault weapons traced to crimes has dropped by 18%. And every gun removed from the streets may mean one more police officer who returns home at the end of the shift, or one more child who gets to celebrate another birthday.

It's also unnecessary to repeal the ban because the only people who need assault weapons are criminals, drug dealers and thugs. These are weapons of war, designed for only one reason, close-quarter, rapid-fire killing. Honest citizens don't need these. Honest business people don't. And honest hunters don't. I know, I'm a hunter. As I've mentioned before, I was probably 12 years old when I fired my first .22 or .410, and I fondly remember bagging my first quail. And let me tell you, I'd hate to see the looks of any tiny quail that was shot out of the sky with an AK-47 assault rifle.

The Assault Weapons Ban actually protects 650 specific hunting and recreational guns. No law abiding hunter, or citizen, will have his or her gun taken away. This isn't about eliminating guns; it's about eliminating gun violence.

Finally, repealing the Assault Weapons Ban is just plain deadly. You see, Officer Jones wasn't only a victim of a gang member. No, he was also the victim of the gun violence epidemic. Despite the fact that we've seen serious crime drop for the fourth year in row, this epidemic still kills and wounds thousands of Americans each year. And none of us are immune to this particular disease. So as long as assault weapons remain on the street, all of us remain their potential victims.

I'm vetoing the repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban because I want to protect all the officers of the "thin blue line" who risk their lives for us. And because I want to protect our children and grandmothers who happen to wander into a 7-11 at the wrong moment. And

because I want to protect every American from the fear that they will become the next victim of a criminal with an assault weapon. We need no more heroes like Bill Jones.

You know, it's been said that death is the ultimate tragedy. But a far greater tragedy would be to allow the repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban, and so let our streets turn into killing fields.

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REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
IN VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

To the law enforcement officials, thank you for joining us. I know many of you traveled great distances from your States and communities, and you represent them proudly with your work.

To the police officers, thank you, too, for joining us. And thank you for the work you do every day to protect our parents, our children, and our neighbors; you honor us with your presence today.

Susan Jones, thank you for being here. On an occasion like this, we think about the debt that we owe to your late husband, Officer Bill Jones, for his hard work in protecting the people of your community. It is with him in mind that we continue our efforts to ensure that criminals are not better armed than our police.

When my Administration took office, we pledged to stop talking about crime and start doing something about it. We knew if we worked together, we could reverse the hopelessness that too many Americans were feeling about the surge of crime that was keeping them locked in their homes.

Working with Congress, we put a comprehensive plan in place. We enacted my program to put 100,000 more police on the street. We made "three strikes and you're out" the law of the land, expanded the death penalty, and beefed up other penalties against crime. We passed the Brady Bill to provide for background checks of those who want to buy handguns. And we banned 19 deadly assault weapons -- without, without infringing on the legitimate rights of hunters.

Our work is paying off. We have now reduced violent and serious crime for five years in a row. That's the longest such drop in 25 years. Murders are down, rapes are down, armed robberies are down, and drug use is down. We have kept handguns away from over 100,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers, many of whom surely would have used those guns to commit new crimes.

Of course, our work is not done. We must not rest until crime becomes a shocking exception to our lives. In particular, we must focus on juvenile crime by strengthening our laws and providing more resources -- while we steer our young people away from gangs and give them something to say yes to.

But now, just when we've begun to win the fight, the Republican majority in Congress wants to turn back the clock. With the gun lobby at their side, they want to return to the days when criminals had more firepower than our police. [Yesterday], they sent me a bill to repeal the assault weapon ban.

My friends, I have repeatedly made it clear that I would not allow that to happen. And I will not today.

Members of Congress voted for the assault weapons ban at great political risk. With the gun lobby working against them, many of them lost their seats in the next election. But they were right to enact the ban, and Congress is wrong to try to repeal it now.

Police officers do not face such political risks. Each day, they face much more serious personal risks. Each day, they put their lives on the line to protect you and me. We have lost too many good police officers like Bill Jones. And I will do everything I can to see that we do not lose more.

With this pen -- the same pen I used to sign the assault weapons ban three years ago -- I am vetoing this bill. And I will veto any future effort to repeal the ban. On this issue, I will not budge.

Thank you, and God bless you.

REMARKS FOR VETO OF REPEAL OF ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

Good Morning. There are many difficult decisions that confront a president every day, decisions that can keep me up nights agonizing over what is best for America. The decision to veto this bill and, in doing so, preserve the assault weapons ban was not one of them.

Just spend a few minutes with Susan Jones, whose husband Bill, a 10-year police veteran, was killed by a gang member with an AK-47 during a convenience store hold-up; or talk to any one of the brave law enforcement officers standing behind me who put their lives on the line every day to protect us from harm; or look into the eyes of a young child who walks to school each day fearing that an assault rifle could make that day her last, and the answer becomes very clear.

This repeal is a step backward. It is a step that will undermine the efforts we began four years ago to free our children and families from the grip of crime and senseless violence. It is a step I can not in good conscience take on behalf of the American people.

This repeal would knock out a cornerstone of the comprehensive plan we passed in 1994 to reclaim our neighborhoods from criminals, a plan that has led to the fifth straight decline in our annual crime rate. Our plan has put 100,000 new community police officers on the streets -- 100,000 dedicated officers who have worked closely with the people they serve to catch criminals, to shut down crack houses, and to prevent crime from happening in the first place.

But our plan has also recognized that our police alone can not bring peace, hope and order to our communities. They need stronger laws to back them up. That's why we put tough new penalties on the books to keep dangerous or repeat offenders in jail for longer sentences. And no police officer can match the lethal barrage of an assault rifle. Each AK-47 that is allowed onto our streets traps too many of our fellow Americans in communities polluted by fear. Each one robs all of us of the freedom to raise our children in peace and safety. That's why we took 19 kinds of assault weapons off our streets and passed the Brady Bill to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

The right to bear arms has been a vital part of our constitution for centuries. And throughout my twenty-years in public service, I have done everything in my power to defend the second amendment. But I believe with all my heart that the assault weapons ban does not infringe on this right. In the two years since the assault weapons ban became the law of the land, no hunter has had to miss a single hunting season, no law-abiding citizen has been stopped from buying a gun to defend his or her family.

But, because of this law, Americans like Susan Jones, our law enforcement officers, and families all across our country have gained greater peace of mind and the opportunity to live in safer neighborhoods, to walk along safer streets and to pursue their dreams in safer communities. I refuse to jeopardize this progress. I refuse to jeopardize our children's lives and their futures. And I have no choice but to veto this bill.

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L-1

Statement of the President Upon Vetoing Repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban

Thank-you. Thank-you, Attorney General Reno, Secretary Rubin, Secretary Shalala, General McCaffrey, FBI Director Freeh, Undersecretary Kelly [police chiefs and other acknowledgees]. Let me extend a special welcome to Susan Jones, the wife of police officer Bill Jones who was tragically killed in the line of duty, and their children Stephanie and Bill, Jr. who are with us here today.

Throughout history, American Presidents have used the power of the veto to protect the values that bind us together.

As President, one of my most important goals has been to strengthen those values so that we may better pursue our rights under the Constitution to life, liberty and the pursuit of the American Dream.

Four years ago, when I took office, we faced a terrible plague of violence. The appearance of a new weapon on our streets, the assault weapon, placed our police at a new level of risk. Despite an overwhelming consensus among law enforcement officers that these deadly guns posed an unprecedented threat to our community, the gun lobby and its allies in Congress managed to block any efforts to restrict their sale.

I pledged to work with the law enforcement community and with citizens personally touched by tragedy such as Susan Jones who lost her husband, Bill to a gang member armed with an AKA-47 during a hold up of a 7-11 and Sarah Brady, the wife of President Reagan's press secretary, Jim Brady to ban these deadly weapons.

Three years ago, thanks to their hard work, we passed the Brady Bill which subjects purchasers of handguns to a simple background check and bans assault weapons.

Since then, three deer hunting seasons, three duck hunting seasons and three bear hunting seasons have all passed and not one sportsman has been denied the ability to hunt.

But 60,000 convicted felons, drug dealers, fugitives, and stalkers have been denied guns. And 3,000 fewer people died last year from gun violence.

Passing that bill was the right thing to do.

But last week Congress, backed by the gun lobby, voted to repeal the assault weapons ban. Despite the pleas of the widows and survivors of those gunned down, despite the success of the ban in cutting crime and despite the unanimous opposition of the law enforcement community, Congress has voted to permit criminals, fugitives and others to buy assault weapons over the counter.

Over the last four years, we have made great progress in cutting crime. We made three strikes and you're out, the law of the land. We told drug dealers who prey on public housing: one criminal conviction and you're out. We told sexual predators: the law will follow you wherever you go. We are on track to put 100,000 more police officers on the street. And we banned assault weapons outright.

Our plan is working. Today, there are one million fewer crime victims today than four years ago. We are looking to build a nation in the 21st Century where people feel safe when they go out at night, untroubled when their children go off to school and where no one's grandmother lives across the street from a crackhouse. With crime down five years in a row, this is no time to retreat.

Earlier this year, I sent Congress a message: that I would veto any bill to repeal the assault weapons ban.

And so with this pen which Dwight Eisenhower used to sign legislation to expand the FBI, I veto this bill because it would result in more deaths and more orphans, it would result in more fear in our community and it would result in more danger for our brave men and women in law enforcement.

A-2

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE STUDENTS OF SMALLTOWN OHIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Smalltown, Ohio
JULY 22, 1996, 3:30 P.M. EDT

It is great to be back in Ohio. Whenever I come back here, I think of that beautiful, plaintive duet about your state, written by Leonard Bernstein, in his 1950s musical, *Wonderful Town*, in which two sisters move from Ohio to Manhattan in the 1930s to pursue careers in what to them seemed like a new economy. Their first apartment turns out to be a tiny, single room in Greenwich village next to where the city is blasting a hole to bury the elevated train tracks to create New York City's subway system, and homesick, the sisters reminisce about their small, midwestern town and ask: "Why? Oh, why? Oh, why, Oh!?! Why did I ever leave O-hi-o?" It's a question that I have a hard time answering whenever I return.

I enjoy getting out of Washington. Like many of you, I grew up in a small town, and I miss it a lot. Ohio always feels like home; it has a special place in Hillary's and my heart for your voters gave is the electoral college points we needed to put us over the top in 1992 and to send us to the White House. And whenever I come back here, I see old friends.

[BRIEF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS HERE OF FRIENDS IN THE AUDIENCE]

I've seen a lot of the world in the last four years, and I'm not sure that you could improve on what you have right here. A community college is a little like a Wonderful Town; schools, to me, have always seemed like extended families. They are one of the last institutions in America where, in the best circumstances, so many different people can interact. From this podium I can see mothers and fathers with small children, teenagers who look fresh out of high school, and even a few old folks, with gray hairs like me. These days we hear a lot of about the global village and the global economy. Everyone emphasizes the global part of these phrases, but today I'd like talk about the village, and how the world has come to our backyards.

Four years ago, when I took office, the World Wide Web didn't even exist. Today, in addition to my quarters in the White House, I have a home page. Were Lincoln and Douglas alive, they might conduct their historic debates in an online chat room. I may be the President of the United States, but my daughter Chelsea knows more about computers than I do. In fact she nearly knows as much as Al Gore. The Vice President, who is heading our administration's technological initiative, has promised to give me a few lessons once he's insured that our system of public education is prepared to meet demands of the 21st century. Today, any one of you can visit any of the computer centers in Ohio's community college system and hook up, via the Internet, with someone across the street or across the state or across the globe. While it's true that technology is changing our society with a rapidity that sometimes seems bewildering. These same

changes hold the potential for new for economic growth. The same innovations that threaten to rend our society into richer and poorer and the technological haves and have-nots are the same ones that us with new means of communication that can bring us closer together.

About the only thing that seems certain in this brave new world is that "continuing education," your business here, will become a lifetime pursuit. More than ever in the next century, economic advancement will go hand and hand with educational opportunity. Cutting education spending as we move into the 21st century would be like cutting defense spending at the height of the Cold War. More than half of the nation's school buildings were built before World War II. Some are still heated by coal. Some are not heated at all. It makes no sense to wire our schools for the 21st century as the masonry and ceilings crumble. Today's Democratic has pledged to help communities rebuild our educational infrastructure by providing billions of dollars to build new facilities for our children. At the same time, it's important to recognize that reforms need not all be so sweeping or so expensive as long as they're concrete: school uniforms are just one idea that we've supported that can have an enormous impact.

It's imperative that we expand opportunities to all our citizens so that they can keep pace with ever-more sophisticated technology. With that goal in mind, we reformed the student loan program, making college more affordable for some 5.5 million students. We have expanded the Pell Grant scholarships to deserving students, and through our national service program, AmeriCorps, some 40,000 Americans have earned the money they need for college by helping our communities. I am proud of these accomplishments, but we have not done enough. We should allow people to

use money from their IRAs to help pay for college. We can look to states and local communities for innovative ideas. I'd like to create a \$1,500 tax cut for Americans, modeled on Georgia's successful HOPE scholarships, to guarantee the first year at a community college such as yours. This is not a new entitlement program nor the birth of a new educational bureaucracy. Only students who can make the grade--by maintaining B average--will continue to receive their scholarships. And in economy as mobile as our own, we understand the need for national standards in education, so that kids who change schools because their parents change jobs can pick up in their new schools where they left off in their old. As it is, the chances of a child's dropping out of high school increases 2.5 percent every time his or her family relocates, regardless of family background or income, and that is wrong.

By investing in our children and in our workers, we have made America strong again. When Republicans blast big government, they're usually criticizing their own Republican party. During the years of the so-called Reagan Revolution, the deficit quadrupled as the size of government ballooned. Today's Democratic party has cut the size of the federal workforce to its smallest level in three decades. And we did this while fending off old Republican party assaults on medicare, social security, and funding for education. In 1992, Today's Democratic party promised to cut the deficit in half in four years; we not only kept our promise, we cut it even more than that. In fact, in 1995, under Today Democratic party, federal spending, as a share of the economy, was lower than in any year under Reagan or Bush.

Today's Democratic party's tough trade policies and worker investment have also begun to pay off. Wages, after years of stagnation, are finally on the rise. Under the old Republican party, America's automakers trailed Japan for thirteen years straight. In 1994, the United States surpassed Japan as the world's leader in automobile production. Under the old Republican party, America trailed Japan in semiconductor manufacture; today, we are the world's leader. The combined unemployment, inflation and mortgage rate is at its lowest level since the Great Society. Home ownership is at a fifteen-year high. And in just under three-and-a-half years, the new Democratic party has created 9.7 million new jobs; this is stronger job growth than in any Republican Administration since the really old days of the 1920s. Boy, no wonder Republicans hate government so much; compared to ours, theirs was lousy.

What this means for Ohioans is that nearly a million students or former students will benefit from student loan reforms. When you're done with your schooling, you'll be entering a robust economy; the unemployment rate in the state has dropped from seven percent to under five. Some 50,000 high-wage factory jobs have opened up in the last forty months. It is just a beginning. We have more work to do. But with your help in November, we can continue our commitment to the future, to our families, and to our children. I'm hoping you can help put Hillary and me over the top again. *Thank you.*

(B-2)

President William J. Clinton
Remarks at Anytown Community College

Entering a new century is a little bit like turning 50 -- which is something I'm now learning about. It's a time for excitement. A time for fear -- just a little. A time for a large celebration -- I hope. But, above all, it's a time to learn from our past successes and failures and move toward the future with new ideas, new strength, and new hope. And, that's exactly what this Presidential campaign should be about. Not the horse race -- who's up, who's down, who's in, who's out. Not the politics of divide and conquer. This campaign is about two very different visions for our future.

Four years ago, I ran for President because I wanted to keep the American Dream alive for every citizen who is willing to work for it. I wanted to restore our sense of community and bring America together around our shared values, instead of letting us drift apart. And, as the Cold War came to a close, I wanted us to remain the strongest force for peace and freedom in the world.

And, I believed that the only way to do all of that was to reignite the basic promise of America. To say to all our citizens, if you work hard, if you play by the rules, if you take responsibility for yourself and your family, you will have the opportunity to reach your God-given potential. Opportunity in exchange for responsibility. That is the promise that built our great country; the glue that has held us together for more than 200 years; and the engine that will propel us into the 21st century stronger and more unified than ever before.

Yet, when I became President, that promise was fading away. So, I asked the Congress to pass a bold economic plan to slash the deficit, create jobs, and put us on the road to long-term growth. Well, we passed that bill, and we did it without a single Republican vote. They called it a "job killer," they said it would "shrink the economy." And, do you know what? They were wrong, and we were right.

Today, we've cut the deficit by more than half. We've created almost 10 million new jobs. We have the smallest federal workforce since the Kennedy Administration. And, what does this mean for the people of Ohio? It means fewer citizens are unemployed and fewer businesses have closed up shop. But, do you know what Ohio has more of? More private sector jobs, more consumer confidence and more than 500,000 working families who are now receiving a tax cut. I am proud of that record -- and I know you are too -- but it's a record to build on, not rest on.

And, I believe we cannot rest until we finish putting our fiscal house in order. Yes, we must continue to eliminate wasteful spending and outdated programs. And, yes, we must balance the budget by the year 2002, but we must do it in a way that protects our families and our values. By protecting, not neglecting our environment. By keeping, not breaking, our promise of health care for our children and our seniors. And, by making sure that education remains the sturdy gateway to the American Dream. At a time when we are living in an information age and competing in a global economy, at a time when our greatest natural resources are our children's minds, we cannot mortgage our future by gutting education.

Education is our passport to the next century.

Congressman Louis Stokes once said something that I'll never forget. He was sitting next to his late brother Carl, whom I had just nominated to be an Ambassador in Africa. Both were great-grandsons of a slave. Both grew up in Ohio's public housing. Both were raised by a single mother. On the day of his brother's Senate hearing, Congressman Stokes said, "I cannot help but remark how proud our mother would be today...She believed that if we acquired education, that we could achieve in this society."

Families have always understood this. And so, for years and for generations, they have saved and sacrificed, getting by with less today so that their children could receive an education -- and get more -- tomorrow. As a nation, we must do no less.

That's why when I came to office, I didn't just talk about being the "education President." I did it. I put education first. We put education first all the way up the educational ladder. From Head Start to National Service, and from Pell Grants to direct student loans that will allow 1 million Ohio students to pay less as they study their way into the American Dream...We put education first.

Unfortunately, the Republicans in Congress have chosen a different path. They want to deny direct student loans to 2.5 million students, deny Pell Grants to almost 400,000 students, and deny assistance to more than 150,000 workers who have lost their jobs because of downsizing or the economy. And, I think that's wrong.

Some call for vouchers that would siphon American tax dollars away from public schools and funnel them into private schools. And, that's wrong. We should support public school choice and innovative charter schools -- and we have. We should make character and citizenship count -- and we have. We should set tough standards so that all schools, all students, and all teachers make the grade -- and we have. We should slash red tape and support local flexibility -- and we have. But, we will not strengthen our public schools -- or the students they serve -- by bankrupting them. That's wrong. And, we shouldn't do it.

We must move forward. And, as we do, I have a vision for the future of education in America -- a vision where we knock down all the barriers that keep young people from learning. No student can be lifted up in a school that's falling down. And, no young person should have to walk to school or class through a gauntlet of drugs and gangs and violence. I was proud that we took on the special interests and passed the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban. America is safer because of it. And as long as I am President, they will not be overturned.

I have a vision for the future of education in America -- a vision where every student in our nation has the technology, the computers and the skills they need to not only survive -- but thrive -- in the 21st century. A vision where learning and education and training are lifelong endeavors.

I have a vision for education in America -- a vision where the doors of the best higher education system in the world are flung open for every American who is willing to work for it. I don't have to tell any of you how important this is: Many of you work. Many of you have families. Many of you have returned to school. But, all of you know this: In this day and age, as the wage gap between those who attend college and those who do not continues to grow, education is an investment you cannot afford to pass up.

We need to make 14 years of education the Gold Standard for every American. That's why we have a new plan that says to any citizen who wants to go to college: We will give you a tax cut of \$1,500 to help cover your first year tuition at community college. And, we will give you the same tax cut for the second year, but only if you earn it, by getting a B average.

It's opportunity in exchange for responsibility. And, it's called America's Hope, because, just like the GI Bill, it's for our entire country. Families are stronger, communities are stronger and America is stronger when more Americans go to college. I'll never forget the pride I felt when my mother went back to school. All children need their parents to pass down lessons of right and wrong, lessons of reading and writing, lessons of discipline and commitment.

That's the kind of commitment that we are seeing in Atlanta today -- as citizens from all over the globe stand united by the spirit of teamwork and the quest for victories -- victories that are shared by all of us. In fact, America's first medal went to a swimmer named Angel Martino. And, I'm told that she immediately gave it to a young athlete who is battling cancer, telling her, "I think you're a hero. Keep fighting."

I hope all of you will keep fighting. For your families. For your communities. For our future. America works best when it works together. And, if we stand together and work together today, I know that our best days are yet to come.

Thank you. And, God bless you all.

C-2

Education and the Economy
A Speech Delivered to a Midwestern Community College

Years ago, when many of our grandparents and great grandparents arrived on the shores of our nation, they stepped onto this land eager to experience for themselves a wondrous thing they'd heard about called the American Dream. They arrived here, not looking for hand-outs or gold cards, but simply looking for a chance. A chance to lift themselves and their families up into a better station in life. A chance to improve themselves, relying on nothing more than their own ingenuity and skill and sweat.

They chose to come here because America promises what no other nation on earth offers in such abundance: Opportunity.

Today our nation faces the challenges of a whole new world. A new economy where our competitors aren't just across the street, but across the globe. A new economy where a nation's greatest asset isn't its factories, which are today mobile, but its skilled workforce, which is fixed.

I'm here today to talk to you -- young men and women in college and in high school -- because you understand better than most that the key to opportunity in this new world is education.

Two weeks ago in the State of the Union Address, I laid out my Call To Action for American Education. This plan sets the stage for the kind of educational opportunity necessary for a nation and a people prepared to make the most of the century to come. These are not abstract principles, but are practical and achievable goals. Goals that we must, as a nation, begin to achieve right now. Why?

Education - 2

Because, we are living during an extraordinary moment in our nation's history. A moment of both abundance and peace. A moment that will not stand still, but that for now offers itself as a great canvas upon which our national destiny can be drawn.

Never before in the history of this country have we been blessed with such riches. Over the past four years we've created economic growth by investing in our people. We've cut the deficit in half and have created over 11 million new jobs. While much of Europe is facing record inflation and joblessness, our own inflation rate remains low and our unemployment is under 6 percent.

But you know, and I know, that now's no time to stop. We have to take the next steps to ensure growth and economic opportunity for you -- the next generation of American workers.

You, about to enter the job market, are seeing first-hand the kind of change that is happening all around us. You know that the new economy does not value the same skills and resources it once did.

The new engines of productivity in America run on knowledge instead of strength. Where once an American could make a good living with very little training at an auto assembly plant, today there are fewer of those jobs. Instead, workers, including auto workers, need computer skills. They need to be able to collaborate in teams. They need to be innovative in creating new paths to greater efficiency.

In the new economy the entry level jobs that years ago were in manufacturing plants are today in data processing. Computer literacy is a prerequisite. And the consequences of not being prepared are severe. Those without a high school education risk joblessness. Those without a college education are falling further behind in wages.

Education - 3

As Americans, we are poised to take our place in the new economy as the most skilled, the most educated, the most efficient workers in the world. But for us to succeed in this great international competition, we must be prepared -- and we must get prepared now. Here's how I think we can do it:

First, and most important, we must set high national standards for our children. Fourteen years ago, our nation's education system was called "a rising tide of mediocrity." Since then, our country's leaders have spent a lot of time talking about what to do to cure the problems of our schools, but we must go much further. We must set high national standards so that we can finally give our children the guidance they deserve when they put their fates in our hands every day in the simple act of going to class.

Then, we must make sure our teachers are equipped to lift our children to these new heights. We can do that by training and certifying our teachers so that they are the best in the world. And they must be prepared to teach character and citizenship as well as math and science.

We must help our children read. Right now 40 percent of our eight-year-olds are not reading at their grade level. We all know that reading not only prepares our children for the workforce, but prepares them for life by opening their minds to new ideas and stories and worlds. We'll build a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors to make sure every child can read independently by the end of the third grade.

But we must also improve learning even before schooling begins. We'll do this by expanding Head Start and by encouraging parents to begin reading and talking to their children at the earliest stages of life.

Education - 4

We must foster competition and innovation in schools by giving parents the power to choose the right public school for their child. And we must commit federal and state and local money to rebuild those schools. It's hard for our children to study when the ceiling is crumbling above their heads or they are forced to sit elbow to elbow with classmates in cramped trailers. We can do better.

We must take advantage of modern technology, the Internet, so that the same bank of information and knowledge available to a student in Beverly Hills is available to a student in the Bronx.

And finally, we must give more Americans the opportunity to sharpen their skills and broaden their learning throughout their lives by making it easier for them to go to college and to go back to school as adults. We will create an environment in which at least two years of college is the norm. An environment in which no American is forced to do without a college education because he or she simply can't afford it. To accomplish this, I've proposed a \$1500 tax credit for college tuition -- enough to pay for most community colleges, like this one. And I've asked for a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school. Will this help more people go to college? You bet it will.

This is an exciting time to be an American. The national landscape faced by our ancestors has changed, but the opportunity that they saw, glistening like gold on our shores, remains. And the spirit that they left us -- the drive and ambition, the ability to rise to a challenge, the courage to start anew -- is what spurs us on now and is what will ensure that we achieve success in this new world of ours. A world where the American dream of opportunity is a reality that lives on.

END

D-2

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO MIDWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

1:00 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I can't tell you how happy it makes me to be with all of you, graduates, parents, teachers and friends, on this joyous day. But I must confess, I'm also a bit sad---this reminds me that in three short months Chelsea will be heading off to college. I know that in a few years I'll be all smiles like the other dads out here today, but its still hard to see her go.

But there is one thing that does give me comfort, even make me a little excited, about sending her off into the world. I know the kind of country we are placing into her hands and into the hands of these graduates. America has never been so strong. She is still the land of plenty and no nation on earth can match her possibilities.

As you rise up to meet the future, you will see the places your parents called dreams, places they have wished for you in prayer. This has been our greatest American birthright and legacy: that each generation will live in more prosperity, in more peace, with more promise than the last.

Four years ago when I came to the White House, even two years ago when most of you stepped onto this campus, we were met with such criticism, such cynicism. America is on a downturn, they said. The economy is in the tank, wages stagnant, the deficit exploding. You wouldn't be able to find a good job or buy a home. Your neighborhoods would be ripped with violence and drugs. Your children would fail in decrepit schools and if they did make their way through, you wouldn't be able to afford to send them to college. Not only would you not live as well as your parents, you would be the first generation to do worse. The legacy, they said, is over.

How wrong they were. In the past four years 11 million jobs have been created. As you walk across this stage the question is not can you get a job, but which high-wage offer should you take? Maybe you should join the growing number of Americans, more women and minorities than ever,

starting their own business. Hey, the forecast looks good: the lowest combined rates of unemployment, inflation and home mortgages in 28 years; record numbers of new, successful small businesses and exports; targeted tax relief for small businessmen and women hanging out a shingle or opening up a storefront.

With every opportunity there is risk. You could choose a bad company or make the wrong widget. But there are some areas where you will not have to take a loss because you took a chance. When you change jobs, you will not have to worry about losing health care for your family because the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill says your health insurance is protected, even if somebody in your family has been sick. Giving your all on the job will not mean giving less to your family because, like 12 million other Americans, you can take advantage of the Family and Medical Leave Act and be there when your loved ones need you.

As you build your future, you will find that your foundation continues to be your family. No place will be as dear as your home, the place where your toddlers will become teenagers. It is a blessing that 4.4 million more Americans are raising their families in homes they own. I want to expand IRAs so that all of you can begin saving tax-free to buy your own home. And I have proposed a middle-class home ownership tax cut so that when new babies mean its time for a bigger house, every penny from the sale of your old home can go to making that dream come true, not to capital gains taxes.

This is the vibrant, promising America that we give to you. But as the Bible tells us, to whom much is given, much is required. The next American century belongs to you and, more importantly, to the children you will raise in it. It is now your time to be the keeper of the birthright, the steward of the legacy.

We know that nothing is more important to that future than education. As part of my State of the Union address this year I challenged America with a Call to Action for American Education, based on 10 principles. As you become the next generation of parents and teachers you should not be satisfied until there are national standards, assurances that children from Maine to Mississippi are tested for reading in the 4th grade and math in the 8th grade, and that we do whatever necessary to make sure our children pass.

If we want better education, then we need to offer our children the best resources. As part of my budget I have asked that we invest in

certifying 100,000 of our teachers as master teachers; for the funds to help 100,000 Americorps volunteers help us make sure every one of our third graders can read; for a \$5 billion down payment to fight the embarrassing decay that makes so many of our schoolhouses look more like the Little Red Shack.

We dream a world where every child begins to read by watching his parents lips move as they read him a bedtime story; where character is taught at the knee of both parent and teacher; where the poorest child is not left behind by the Internet, but logs on and surfs the Net with the best of them. We want to hear your ideas and we want you to have choices, which is why we will help America create 3,000 charter schools by the next century.

And the learning cannot stop with high school. Two years of college should be as standard as kindergarten, and to do that I have proposed HOPE scholarships, two years of \$1500 tax credits for college tuition---enough to pay for most community colleges like Midwestern. Many of you are going to go on from here to four year colleges, maybe even on to graduate schools. I want to help you do that, and I have included a tax cut package in my budget that will make it easier for you to be the doctors, architects, professors and engineers you want to be. I know there are a lot of youngsters out here, but I see a lot of middle-aged and older Americans getting diplomas too. My G.I. Bill for America's Workers will make it easier for you to come back to places like Midwestern and get the skills you need to meet the future prepared and proud.

If we leave our children nothing else, it should be a world where every 8-year old can read his own bedtime story; where every 12-year old can log onto the Internet; where every 18-year old can go to college; where every adult American is an eternal student.

But if you honor the legacy and the birthright, you will leave your children so much more. You will be the parents and neighbors helping one another raise drug-free kids in gun-free schools in crime-free communities. We have torn down the welfare system and lain a cornerstone for a new America where the best welfare is work. You will be the business owners and religious leaders whose good faith and open hearts will complete this task. You will be the masters of the Superhighway, the settlers of space, the conquerors of the next frontier.

May God bless you and may God bless America.

E-2

SPEECH 2 -- EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY

A hundred years ago, a young man named Walt Whitman was beginning his career as a poet. At the time no one could imagine he would become one of America's great writers. But Whitman had faith in himself, so he sent off a sheaf of unpublished poetry to Ralph Waldo Emerson, asking for his comments. Emerson, already a literary giant, took the time to read the poems and sent back this letter to the aspiring writer: "Dear Mr. Whitman, I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

To those college and high school students here today, it is my pleasure to greet you at the beginning of your own great careers.

I can say this with confidence because, for those willing to work hard and go to school, the future may never have been brighter. Today, America's schools are strong, our commitment to education is steadfast, and our classrooms teach more diverse skills than ever before. If you are ambitious and willing to take on the challenges of education, there are careers, opportunities, and good paychecks out there for you.

It wasn't always so. I'm sure parents here remember that not long ago conventional wisdom said the biggest growth in America would be in minimum-wage jobs. A college graduate, flipping hamburgers for \$3 an hour and living at home, was the poster child some held out for young people in the '90s. In fact, an important book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, wondered if America's best days weren't behind her, including a chapter titled, "The United States: The Problem of Number One in Relative Decline."

But let me tell you, people had good reasons to be uncertain of the future. Five and ten years ago we were running up a federal budget deficit like there was no tomorrow. We were rich in foreclosures and bankruptcies, poor in optimism and confidence. Interest rates were so high that a new car was out of reach for many working families, let alone a college tuition.

American's warhorse industries, like autos and steel that built the Midwest, were facing more competition than ever before while cutting-edge, high-tech firms overseas were putting technology we invented to better use. Our competitors were eager to pick up the mantle of economic leadership that appeared too heavy a burden for America.

As the saying goes: that was then, this is now. America is again the engine that drives the world's economy -- the finest innovator, the greatest exporter, the strongest competitor. We have regained the World Economic Forum's title of Most Productive Economy by making the tough choices; cutting our budget deficit by more than 60 percent, embracing opportunities in the global economy rather than isolating from it, encouraging entrepreneurship, and streamlining our government. Unemployment is at its lowest in seven years, a record number of new businesses have been started, incomes are rising, and we've had the largest increase in home-ownership ever.

Much of the credit for a resurgent America goes, deservedly, to business leaders, working men and women, and decision-makers throughout government. But let me tell you the other part of this equation for success -- education.

Today, 76 million Americans -- 40 percent of adults -- are enrolled in some continuing education classes. That's up from 30 percent just five years ago. These are working men and women who understand skills and technology are evolving as never before and that a career doesn't mean just showing up at work every day -- it means knowing more a year from now than you do today; it means having better skills than a person in Japan, China, Germany, Brazil or elsewhere who wants to do your job.

And today, there is a greater percentage of young people enrolled in college than ever before. I believe this is the product not just of good schooling, but also of college education being more accessible than ever before. In the last four years, we have lowered the cost and improved the reach of the college loan program, added 200,000 slots to work-study plans, and opened up almost 70,000 slots for college through the AmeriCorps national service program.

It's a good start, but that's what it is -- a start.

Understand that projections for the future say 89 percent of new jobs will require more than a high school education. That is why I want to open the schoolhouse doors even wider -- because the single most important thing we can do for our young people and our own economic vitality is to give every single American the chance to go to college.

To begin, we must make at least two years of college just as universal as a high school education is today. To achieve this, I have proposed a \$1,500 a year tuition tax credit -- a HOPE Scholarship -- for the first two years of college, so that the typical community college education can be a reality for every American.

I have also proposed that every working family should be able to deduct up to \$10,000 in college tuition costs per year for education after that. And I believe mothers and fathers should be able to save money for their kids' college tuitions in tax-free IRAs -- put a little bit away, week by week, year by year, earning interest, and withdraw it for college education without any penalties.

For those already in the workforce, I want a new G.I. Bill for American Workers -- a \$2,600 grant for unemployed and underemployed Americans so that they can get the skills they need to go back to work at better paying, more secure jobs.

God bless every family now cutting corners to send a son or daughter to college. But I don't want mothers and fathers to lose sleep as the next tuition payment comes due or to neglect family needs for the sake of college expenses. And I don't want one worker forsaking a computer or management class because it's unaffordable or one kid dropping out of college because of money worries.

We should make it as easy as possible for families to save and send a child to college -- we should not tax the money working families spend on college educations -- and we should

support lifetime learning for working men and women. It is ambitious, I know; but it is part and parcel of our belief that the essence of America is to excel, to achieve, and to surpass the standards set by those before us.

America's growth as a world power -- through two World Wars, the Cold War, and now as the leader of the global economy -- has been mirrored by greater and greater commitments to education. At the beginning of this century, only 6.4 percent of Americans had more than a grade school education -- and the U.S. Commissioner of Patents at the time was telling the country, "Everything that can be invented has been invented." By 1980, when two-thirds of the workforce had high school diplomas, more than two hundred patents a day were being issued. It is no coincidence that as we have expanded education, we have grown, innovated, and prospered. Now we are pushing the bar higher, so that a college education is the standard and continuing education is commonplace. These are investments in America -- investments in skilled workers, investments in employable young people, investments in the competitive advantage of a workforce with capabilities second to none, and investments in your own great careers -- that will pay dividends throughout the nation, our economy, and all of your lives.

Thank you and God bless you.

It always makes me happy to be among such a fine group of America's young people, and among those nurturing them. Teachers and parents don't get enough recognition for the good work they do to ensure our nation's future. And I know you young people are working hard, too. Keep it up.

Working hard is what made America. It is what has brought us the peace and prosperity we enjoy today. By working hard we have finally reduced the size of federal government by more than 10 percent. We have eliminated hundreds of programs, thousands of pages of regulations, privatized more operations than any previous administration, and cut the deficit by 60 percent in four years.

During that same time span, our economy has produced 12 million jobs, which is unprecedented for a four-year period. We have replaced a welfare system that trapped generation after generation in a cycle of dependency with new programs that make responsibility a way of life. As a result, there are more than 2 million fewer people on welfare today than when I took office.

And that's just a start. We won't be satisfied until we achieve a balanced budget that does not ignore the promises made to our parents and our children who depend on Medicare and Medicaid. But that, too, is going to take hard work.

We won't be satisfied until America is well positioned to face the challenges of the new century with an even stronger economy that will give our people better chances to live out their dreams than at any other time in human history.

This is no time to be complacent, to become satisfied with the unprecedented tranquility and well-being we enjoy today. We have been given an opportunity almost unique in American history to fashion a future that will embrace everyone in this country. We must not let this opportunity pass.

One of the biggest challenges facing us is to create a world-class education system that reaches every child in every state of this nation. We must dramatically reform our public schools, demanding high standards and accountability from every teacher and every student.

Innovations such as public choice, school choice and charter schools should be encouraged. But as these grass-roots reforms occur, and local control of the schools is maintained, we need to develop a system of measurement that can be used nationally to determine how well our children are learning in every state.

Nearly eight years ago, as governor of Arkansas, I had the privilege of helping put together the National Education Goals. In shorthand, we said this nation should do four things -- make sure every 8-year-old is able to read, every 12-year-old is able to log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old is able to go to college, and every adult is able to keep learning for an entire lifetime.

My balanced budget commits \$51 million next year toward reaching these goals. But far more than money is required. That's why I have issued a Call to Action for American Education that is based on 10 principles. You have likely heard about these ideas by now, but I think it's important that we go over them again.

First, we need a national crusade for education standards. I didn't say federal government standards, I said national standards. Every state and school should fashion its curriculum to reflect these standards and train teachers so they can lift students to them.

Second, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has worked very hard with educators and public officials to establish nationally accepted credentials for

Speech 2

excellence in teaching. But only 500 teachers have been certified since 1995. My budget will enable 100,000 more to seek national certification as master teachers. And as we reward them, we should quickly and fairly remove those who don't measure up.

Third, 40 percent of our 8-year-olds cannot read and that just won't do. Through our America Reads initiative we are recruiting 1 million volunteer tutors who will help make sure every child can read independently by the third grade. We want 100,000 college students to help, and already 60 college presidents have pledged their schools' participation.

As part of our fourth principle, which recognizes that learning begins in the first days of life, the First Lady and I are going to convene a White House Conference on Early Learning and the Brain this spring. And my balanced budget will expand the Head Start program to reach 1 million children by 2002.

Fifth, we want every state to give parents the power to choose the right public school for their children. And to give parents more choices we have a plan that will help America create 3,000 new charter schools by the next century. That's seven times as many as there are now.

Sixth, we must bring character education back to our schools. Children must be taught order and discipline and how to be good citizens. Truancy laws must be enforced, disruptive students removed from the classroom. Guns and drugs must not be tolerated.

We cannot expect children to raise themselves up in schools that are overcrowded or falling down. As part of our seventh principle, our budget will commit \$5 billion to help communities finance \$20 billion in school construction over the next four years.

Eighth, we want to establish America's HOPE Scholarship, which will provide two years of a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition. That's enough for the typical junior college, but I have also proposed a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school, an expanded IRA that you can withdraw from tax-free for education, and the largest increase in Pell Grant scholarships in 20 years.

To make it easier for adults to continue learning and qualify for the jobs of the future, we want Congress to stop sitting on the G.I. Bill for American Workers, which will transform the confusing jumble of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly to the worker who needs it.

Finally, we have challenged America to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by 2000 to make sure no child, whether in an isolated rural town, an affluent suburb or an inner-city neighborhood, is denied access to the same universe of knowledge.

These 10 areas where America must work harder to improve the education it provides its children reflect what I have learned over the years in dealing with this issue. I have spent a lot of time in our schools, a lot of time listening to teachers, listening to parents. They have made me realize how important this topic is to the future of our nation.

Education is the great equalizer. It provides the opportunity for a poor boy from Arkansas or a shy girl from Michigan to overcome whatever stumbling blocks there may be in their lives and fulfill their greatest dreams.

America is the great nation it is because of the opportunities it provides all of its citizens. But for them to take advantage of those opportunities, they must have the ability to learn what other children can. There is no greater challenge facing this nation than the improvement of its schools. We must all work hard to see that they succeed.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADDRESS

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Today we stand at a unique moment in our history. As the sun sets on an era tempered by the Cold War, we look to a new century to provide us with new challenges and new hope.

We begin a time when knowledge and the promise of information lay the foundation of our success.

We as Americans are singularly capable of taking advantage of this opportunity. We are the only superpower on the planet. Our economy has seen unprecedented growth. 12 million new jobs. Declining welfare rolls. New heights in free trade. New progress toward a balanced budget. The smallest federal work force in 35 years.

We are a nation ready to take advantage of its strength, but only if we understand our place in history. No longer can we rely on foreign threats to inspire us. We can meet the challenges of a new time only from within. The fear of complacency is threat enough.

Between 1992 and 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills - yet only half the people entering the work force have these skills.

Our education system needs to meet the challenges of this knowledge economy, and our political system must be the inspiration for - not the enemy of - change. Our future in the new world is at stake. The education of our children is at stake. Politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

The Vice President and I have traveled the country, challenging our states, our communities and our families to produce students who thrive in the 21st century. Today I

challenge you - parents, teachers and students alike - to prepare yourselves and your children. If we meet the education challenges of today, we will meet the global challenges of tomorrow.

We set some modest goals to start our journey forward. Imagine. Imagine if every 8-year-old could read, every 12-year-old could log onto the Internet, every 18-year-old could go to college and every adult could learn for a lifetime. Imagine what our country could do.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a 10-point plan, a call to action for American education, an ambitious agenda that goes from early childhood to adult learning.

Let me touch on some of the points before I focus on a few.

We must study the learning patterns of early childhood and set our children on a course of lifetime learning. We must train one million volunteers to help every child read by age 8. We must make a small investment to rebuild the schools that literally are falling apart.

We must inspire reform through public school choice and charter schools. Giving parents the right to choose provides incentive for our schools to work harder.

We must teach children citizenship and complement character education with community curfews, truancy prevention and initiatives that promote a disciplined learning environment.

We must connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000, giving everyone access to the World Wide Web of information. We must make it easy for adults to return to school by offering flexible skills grants for education and training.

I want to detail three more points in this call to action - three points that affect all of you.

First, we must increase access to college for everyone. Access to college now means access to the global economy later. My friends in the space program like to say, "the higher your education, the higher your elevation."

We want to make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as high school. Our HOPE scholarship plan provides a \$1500 tax credit for two years, enough to pay for a community college like this one.

We are also proposing a yearly tax deduction of \$10,000 for higher education, an expanded, tax-free IRA for tuition and the largest Pell Grant increase in 20 years.

I know the high school students here today are thinking about the high cost of college - and the college students here, well, you already know. But know this too: you can make no better investment in your future than education. With a little help from us and a lot of hard work from you, you will reap the rewards of higher education for a lifetime.

Second, we must hold our children to high standards. The parents here know: when we expect more from our children, we get more from our children.

We are leading an effort to develop national standards - not federal government standards - to provide our children with a knowledge base for the century ahead.

To ensure that the standards are met, we want every state to test fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math by 1999.

These standards are voluntary. But I wouldn't want to be the governor of a state that said no to challenging our children. I wouldn't want to find out too late that the kids in my state lagged behind others.

The only goal of standards is to pass - to demonstrate basic language and math skills. Some will not pass. But the parents here today should know that standards will tell you where your kids need help. In the end, standards will elevate our children, and all of us will be more secure in the years ahead.

Third, we must help our teachers excel in the classroom. Effective teachers produce effective citizens.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has developed standards for teacher excellence. Teachers who improve their skills can gain certification as master teachers. To date only 500 have been certified.

Our budget provides enough funding to certify 100,000 master teachers. We hope to have a well-trained master teacher in every school in America, sharing his or her skills and lifting the quality of classroom instruction.

We should reward master teachers and others who make a unique contribution to the classroom. I would like to thank the teachers here today for the choice you made. I can think of no more noble calling than to shape the hearts and minds of our young people.

I believe our call to action for American education can make a difference. But it won't matter how we do our jobs in Washington if you don't do your job right here.

Each of you has a responsibility to take the tools that government provides and carve out a section of the knowledge economy - whether you're a parent reading to a newborn, a ninth grader studying algebra or a college student who wants to start a business.

Take advantage of the opportunity of our time. Enter the new world with confidence and the understanding that we live at the dawn of America's brightest day.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT WABASH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

One of the great privileges of being President is that I get the opportunity to travel all over this country and meet groups of young people like you. Your energy and creativity help to fuel our nation's growth, and your futures are our most precious resources.

That is what I have come here to talk about today -- your futures, the role that education must play in them, and the impact that will have on our economy. For it is no secret to you -- students, teachers and parents -- that educational excellence is the key to ensuring that your futures are rich in opportunity. We live in the age of the global information economy, an age in which success requires knowledge, in which education and training are the keys to prosperity.

In this Information Age, the strength of our economy is inextricably bound to the knowledge and capacity of our people. Right now, our economy is strong. Since 1992, we have produced 12 million jobs. That was unprecedented growth over a four-year period. Our welfare rolls have declined, and our science and technology have leapt ahead at astounding speeds.

Yet the numbers also tell a sobering tale about the task we face. Between 1992 and 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require literacy and math skills beyond the high school level. As it stands now, only half of the people entering the work force will be prepared for these high-skill, high-paying jobs. Without expanding our educational opportunities, we will soon be unable to expand our economy.

To prepare for the knowledge economy of the 21st century, we must give all Americans the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. To do that, we must work together to meet some basic educational goals: every 8-year-old must be able to read; every 12-year-old must be able to log onto the Internet; every 18-year-old must be able to go to college; and every adult American must be able to keep on learning for a lifetime.

At the beginning of this term, I issued a challenge to the nation to meet those goals and ensure that every American has the best education in the world. That challenge begins with our national leadership, in my Administration and in Congress. Educational excellence must be our number one priority, and for the next four years it certainly will be mine.

There are those who say we cannot afford to take the steps needed to achieve our educational goals. I say we cannot afford not to. The costs of a national crusade for better education pale in comparison to the costs of allowing America's education to founder. Indeed, our economic prosperity in the 21st century depends on the commitment of our national leadership to educational excellence.

That effort must be united; we cannot allow our crusade for education to become mired in petty partisanship. During the Cold War, when our national security was threatened by communism, politics stopped at the water's edge. Today, when our national security depends

upon our ability to compete and win in the global economy, politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

In the balanced budget that I submitted to Congress, my Administration made an unprecedented commitment to educational excellence, devoting \$51 billion to education this year alone. But far more than money and federal effort is required. Our commitment to education must extend beyond Washington -- it must be joined in the legislative halls and city halls, the corporate boards and school boards, and the classrooms and family rooms throughout America.

In my State of the Union address, I described a 10-point plan, a Call to Action for American Education, that describes the steps we must take together if we are to achieve our goals. That plan is central to my vision for our education and our economy, and I want to touch on a few of those points today.

First, we must have genuine, national standards for student performance, representing the levels of education that our students must reach to compete effectively in the knowledge economy. By the time we reach 1999, the threshold to the 21st century, every state should have adopted high national standards. Every school should be testing 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math to make sure that those standards are met.

We must also have standards for our teachers, rewarding the best with master teacher certification and fairly removing those few who do not make the grade.

But teachers cannot do it alone. Forty percent of our 8-year-olds cannot read on their own, and the America Reads initiative will try to mobilize a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors to turn that around in the next two years. We want at least 100,000 of those volunteers to be college students -- that means that America Reads wants you. I hope every student at Wabash and all the surrounding high schools will consider pitching in and helping to teach a child to read.

In order to provide a solid education, the foundations for learning must be strong. That means we must teach character education in our schools and instruct students on how to be good citizens. It also means that the classrooms themselves must have strong foundations, and we must devote the resources necessary to repair our crumbling schools. We must also lay the foundation for the Information Age, by connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000.

To ensure that no one gets left behind on our journey into the 21st century, we must do more to provide quality education beyond high school. I have asked Congress to pass the America's HOPE Scholarship program, which would provide a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, enough to pay for school at a community college like Wabash. I have also asked for a tax deduction for education, an IRA for education, and expanded Pell Grants, all of which will help make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as high school education is today. We

must make Wabash, her sister community colleges, and the four-year colleges and universities of this nation accessible to all Americans who work hard.

Finally, the doors of learning should not swing shut at any age. That's why my G.I. Bill for America's Workers will help equip eligible workers with new skills. Many will be able to use the wonderful resources of community colleges like this one to help launch them onto new paths into the future.

If we work together, we can meet the challenge of educational excellence. We can, and we must. For the quality of American education impacts far more than the opportunities available to individuals; it goes to the very vibrancy of our economy.

The call to excellence in education therefore must be heard by everyone, because everyone has a stake. Throughout our history we have shown that when Americans chart a united course, nothing can stop us. United, we can help ensure that our economy is equipped for the 21st century and that no American is denied the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you and God bless you.

Speech on Education and Economy at Midwestern College

WORD COUNT: 1198

Thank you very much. It's wonderful to be here with all of you at this great institution. I'm also happy to see you high school students and especially your parents, because it's so important that parents play an active role in their children's education. And, of course, it's always a pleasure to be in America's heartland, especially when I get to speak on an issue that's so close to my own heart--education.

1997 actually marks a milestone in the history of American education. Four hundred years ago, the colony of Massachusetts passed the very first American education law. It required that every town of at least 50 people hire a teacher of reading and writing. Those first colonists, huddled in their tiny villages along the Atlantic coast, understood the importance of education for their children, and for their communities. And ever since, making ourselves the best educated nation on earth has always been the very essence of our American dream.

But today, that dream seems to be fading. Many of our students are simply not receiving a quality education. Many more are unprepared for college. And still others, who are prepared, can't attend college because they can't afford the skyrocketing costs. This is intolerable. We're squandering our country's most precious national resource--our children. And not only does it hurt the individual, it also hurts our nation.

The industrial age has given way to the information age and, more than ever before, our economic strength depends on a well educated work force. By the year 2000, 60% of all new jobs in America will require advanced technology skills. But a recent report from the Oregon Employment Department shows that firms in that state already can't find enough workers with certain computer, engineering or technical skills. It's the same in many places, businesses are struggling to fill certain positions because candidates too often lack the education to make the grade. If our firms and factories are to find the educated workers they need, and if these same firms are to remain competitive in the global marketplace, then you students must receive the necessary training and skills. Our economic future depends on it.

If we're to meet tomorrow's economic challenges, we must make our educational system the envy of the world. But how? My answer is simple, and it's one that I hope Hillary won't mind. As you may know, my wife has written that it takes an entire village to raise a child. Well, I believe that it takes an entire community to educate a child. And this means prepared students, involved parents, and an engaged government. Let me explain.

During my State of the Union Address, I unveiled my 10 step plan, Call to Action for American Education. It's a blueprint for guaranteeing that every child receives a quality education, and that every student who has the ability to attend college also has the opportunity. And within its 10 points are found the answers of how we prepare, involve and engage.

If we're to adequately prepare our students, we need--above all--national standards that truly represent what our children must know to succeed in this information age. Every state should adopt high national standards and, by 1999, should test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math. These tests aren't meant to be barriers, but bridges to a better future. They'll show who needs help and how we can improve our schools.

But if our children need standards, so do our teachers. My Call to Action plan and my budget call for 100,000 teachers to seek certification, from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, as master teachers. And let's reward you good teachers.

Complementing this, I've also requested \$5 billion to help communities finance \$20 billion in necessary school construction over the next four years. National standards, better teachers, adequate school buildings, taken together, they'll ensure that our students are prepared for the economic challenges of the future.

But even if our students are prepared, we need involved parents--all of you--as well as all community members. You can't stop caring about schools once your children are grown. In my plan, I've asked for a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors to ensure that every child can read independently by the end of the 3rd grade. Join this army. Or if you're looking for other ways to become involved, let me share with you parents a story from New Jersey.

Last year, I challenged America to connect every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000, and bring the power of the information age into all of our schools. Responding to that challenge, volunteers, parents and corporate citizens came together for “Net Day New Jersey”. On four Saturdays last October, 200 schools in some of that state’s poorest inner cities were wired to the Internet. Corporations like IBM and Johnson & Johnson paid for the infrastructure, and volunteers, in overalls and painter’s hats, did the actual wiring. As I’ve stated in my Call to Action plan, let’s all get involved in efforts like this and ensure that the information highway is a little more accessible to our children.

But even when our students are prepared, and their parents are involved, many families simply can’t afford college. And that’s why government must remain engaged. As part of my plan, I proposed America’s HOPE Scholarship. Under this initiative, I want two years of a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, enough to pay for a community college like this one. This would make the 13th and 14th years of education just as universal in the 21st century as a high school education is in the 20th century. I also want a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school; an expanded IRA you can withdraw from, tax free, for education, and the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years. This isn’t a national expense; it’s a national investment. And if anyone says that this program is too expensive, I say remember Sputnik.

Forty years ago this fall, we saw Russia’s Sputnik, the first earth orbiting satellite, and feared that our educational system was lagging behind the Soviet’s. Our government

responded with an almost unprecedented interest--and investment--in our nation's schools. We can't do less today. Although we aren't facing a political challenge, we're certainly facing the economic challenge of ensuring a well educated, well skilled work force. And we can meet that challenge only if our students are prepared, our parents involved, and our government engaged.

As we approach the 21st Century, a quality education for all isn't a national luxury, it's a national necessity. And it isn't an alien notion, it's national birthright. Because ever since the Massachusetts colony passed that first education law, making ourselves the best educated nation on earth has always been the very essence of our American dream. As individuals we mustn't forget that there's always more to be learned; always more to be seen; always more to be explored. And as a nation--a national community--we must ensure that this particular American dream is always an American reality.

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REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO HOOCHIE-COOCHIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Thank you so much for inviting me here today.

Thank you to the teachers and students from Hoochie-Coochie. You sure do know how to throw a party! And thank you to the students and parents from nearby high schools. As you think about college, I'm sure you find it reassuring that one of our best community colleges is right down the road.

On my drive over to this wonderful auditorium, I noticed a sign-up sheet on your Student Union Building for an intramural basketball tournament. I was all ready to stop the motorcade and run over -- until I remembered that I won't be doing much "running" for awhile. But I'll make a deal with you: If you'll have me back when I'm all healed, I'll give you all a good look at my jump-shot.

Do we have a deal?

Thank you.

I have visited many colleges over the last four years -- including some in this great state of Ohio -- and I've loved every one of them. I love the feel of a college campus -- the energy, the enthusiasm, the sense of unlimited possibilities. I remember feeling all of those things as a college student -- not too many years ago.

In some sense, my generation envies yours. All of you are entering a world of extraordinary change, of lightning-fast computers and global communications and other breathtaking technology that will give more of you a chance to live out your dreams than in any time in human history.

But these sweeping technological changes also present new challenges. And it's those challenges -- and what we need to do to prepare for them -- that I want to talk to you about today.

Think for a moment about the changes that are occurring all around you here in Ohio. Over a hundred years ago, the factories that sprung up in Cleveland, Cincinnati, and elsewhere gave strength to the Industrial Revolution. Millions of Americans, many of them with little education, left their farms to find new opportunities in our growing cities. The story was no different in New York and Boston... in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia... and in Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee.

Our manufacturing centers continue to offer good jobs to many Americans. And we're proud of that. In fact, our economy has produced 12 million new jobs in four years -- the most ever in a four-year period. In Ohio, alone, the economy has produced xx,xxx new jobs and unemployment has dropped to x.x percent. We've cut the Federal deficit by nearly two-thirds, and my budget plan would finish the job and balance the budget. That would bring down interest rates and make our economy even stronger.

But if you drive through Cleveland and Cincinnati these days, and through the surrounding suburbs, the landscape is increasingly dominated not by large factories, but by hundreds of high-tech companies. And here's the important point: More and more, the jobs that these companies offer require technical skills.

From 1992 to the year 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created will require more than high-school levels of literacy and math. But only half the people entering the workforce are prepared for them. Our schools are turning out millions of young people who are not ready for the new world of work.

Education is quickly becoming the dividing line between those who make it and those who don't. Those who have skills for the new jobs are moving ahead. Those without them are falling behind.

So, what are we going to do?

In my State of the Union address, I outlined a 10-point plan of action for education. The idea is to create a world-class education system in which Americans of all ages can get ready for the jobs of tomorrow. We have to see that every 8-year-old can read independently, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go to college, and every adult can keep learning for a lifetime.

I want all children to come to school ready to learn; that's why I've proposed to expand Head Start. I want families to have as much opportunity as possible to improve their schools; that's why I've proposed to fund more charter schools. I want to make sure that children learn in schools that are not falling apart; that's why I've proposed a new program to support more investment in school construction and renovation. And I want to make sure that children are learning what they need to know; that's why I've worked hard to create national standards for language and math.

But we need to do more than improve education for grades 1 to 12. All of you know the financial burdens that college can impose. Many of you are working to pay your way -- and I applaud you for your commitment. In the last four years, we've made college more affordable -- by lowering the costs of student loans, expanding work-study, and opening up slots for college through our national service program.

But we need to do more. We need to make sure that every American who wants to go to college can afford to go -- whether here at Hoochie-Coochie or somewhere else. In fact, we need to make two years of education after high school as universal by the year 2000 as a high school diploma is today.

And we can do that. My budget plan proposes a \$1,500-a-year HOPE scholarship that would cover the typical costs of tuition at a community college. As you know, that would fully cover tuition costs here at Hoochie-Coochie. To get the credit in the second year, students would have to earn at least a B average in their first year. The point is that if you do your part, we'll do ours.

My budget also proposes a \$10,000-a-year tax deduction for the costs of any education after high school; an expanded IRA so that families can withdraw money tax-free if they use it for higher education; another 100,000 work study slots; and the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years.

As you may know, my economic team is meeting with the leaders of Congress' budget committees to reach an agreement on balancing the budget. But we have to balance the budget the right way. We have to cut waste while still investing in the future. And there's no wider path to the future than through education.

Let me tell you what I've told my economic team: I will not accept a budget that does not provide tax relief to help middle-income families send their children to college or other education after high school. We can balance the budget and still do all that. And we must.

Our history as a nation is rich with stories about the challenges that we have faced and overcome -- the challenges of winning a war and securing the peace, of expanding opportunity at home, and of exploring the heavens.

Now, we face another challenge of equal magnitude -- the challenge of educating our people for a world of limitless opportunity but fierce competition. The question is: Will we step aside and avoid the challenge? Or, as we have done so many times before, will we once again confront the task together?

If we do the right thing, we can see to it that your generation enjoys everything that the future has to offer.

I'm betting that we will.

Thank you, and God bless you.

REMARKS FOR MIDWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Thank you for that very warm welcome. It feels great to be here.

I've come to Midwestern Community College today to talk about a subject that's been a priority -- some have called it an obsession -- of mine for as long as I've held public office. I've come to talk about education, about the importance of providing all Americans opportunities for lifelong learning, and about what we all must do as a nation to strengthen our schools and expand access to our colleges and universities.

And I've come to talk about it here, at Midwestern Community College, because I believe that the future of this town, of this state, of our nation, and of our democracy depend on institutions of higher learning just like this one.

For decades, our community colleges have been vital guardians of the American Dream, keepers of the cherished promise that in America, anyone who is willing to work and study hard can get the education he or she needs to build a better life.

This community college, like so many others across the country, has opened the doors of learning and opportunity for millions who once thought a higher education was out of reach. I know I'll find in any of these classrooms single mothers training for jobs that will free them from the welfare rolls; veteran office and factory workers returning to school for the new high-tech skills of the Information Age; immigrants learning to speak the language of their new country; 18-year olds preparing to transfer to four-year colleges; and a host of other citizens working hard to meet the challenges of the future.

As all of you -- the students, faculty and staff of Midwestern -- are showing us, education in America doesn't have to be a one-shot deal. Instead, it can be a lifelong process.

The principles that lie at the core of the American community college's mission -- that opportunities for learning must be available to all who are willing to work and study hard; and that those opportunities be available at all stages of life -- must be at the core of our efforts to prepare all Americans for the 21st century.

As we enter a new, increasingly high-tech, fast-paced global economy, where American workers will find themselves competing for jobs with peers from Beijing to Berlin, our ability to keep up with the rapidly changing demands of the workplace will become even more important than ever.

While the new economy has brought unprecedented opportunities for Americans, it has also demanded a whole new set of skills that many people who completed their educations thirty, twenty, ten, or even five years ago just do not have. Between 1992 and the year 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and

math skills. Today, even though more than 80 percent of our children are graduating from high school, more than half of all Americans entering the workforce lack these skills.

What does this mean? It means that the American Dream is in jeopardy. Too many of our fellow Americans -- from our newly minted high school graduates to men and women with dozens of years in the workforce -- are not prepared to seize the countless opportunities of the new millennium.

That is why I've made strengthening our educational system -- so that Americans of all ages who are willing to work hard can get the knowledge and skills they need to survive and thrive -- my primary goal as president these next four years. In my State of the Union address, I described a 10-point Call to Action for American Education that supports, preserves and expands opportunities for lifelong learning, addressing the educational needs of Americans from the moment they are born to the day they retire from the workforce. The vision is simple: Every 8-year old must be able to read, every 12-year old must be able to log onto the Internet, every 18-year old must be able to go to college, and all adults must be able to keep on learning.

The specific proposals are just plain common sense: Our children deserve talented and dedicated teachers and administrators who will help them meet national standards of achievement. They deserve safe and spacious schools, places where their primary challenge is not to stay dry in hallways plagued by leaky ceilings or to ignore the hard-sell of a drug dealer, but to understand an algebra problem or create a website on the Internet. Our neediest children deserve the benefits of early childhood education programs such as Head Start, proven programs that ensure they arrive in our schools ready and eager to learn. And our parents deserve the opportunity to choose the public schools that best suit their child's needs.

For the past two centuries, as our democracy has grown and matured, as we have recognized the transforming effects of higher education not only in the lives of individuals, but in the vitality of our economy and society, we have helped more and more Americans attend college. We've built great public universities and community colleges in every state of Union, passed the G.I. Bill that enlarged the pool of college graduates in our country by unprecedented numbers, created federal student loans and Pell Grants that to this day make college tuition much more affordable.

As a result, America enjoys the best, most accessible system of higher education on Earth. Over the years, I've met parents who have sacrificed comfortable lives in their native countries to take minimum wage jobs as dishwashers or waiters because they knew that their children would have more opportunities for higher education in America.

These are wonderful reasons to take pride in our system of higher education. But let us also recognize that we must throw open the doors of learning even wider. Too many families across our country are worried that despite their best efforts to save for the future, rising tuition costs will keep their children from college or else saddle them with mounds of insurmountable

debt. At the same time, we are living in a time when a higher education is no longer just a luxury. It is a necessity. Today, a typical worker with a college degree makes 73 percent more than a worker with a high school diploma. Two years of college mean a 20 percent increase in earnings.

That is why it is time to make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as the first twelve. I've called upon Congress to support America's HOPE scholarships, a \$1,500 tuition tax credit which would be enough to pay for a year's education at community colleges such as Midwestern or take a bite out of tuition fees at a four-year institution. To give families even more flexibility and opportunity, I'm also asking Congress to support a \$10,000 tax deduction for tuition after high school, tax-free IRAs for college tuition, and an increase in Pell Grants to help our neediest students fulfill dreams of higher education. And for workers who have been laid off or who want to upgrade their skills, I'm proposing that we consolidate various federal job training programs into a single training grant for tuition at vocational school or community college.

Strengthening our schools, expanding access to college, honoring the principle of lifelong learning -- these are some of the ways we can make sure that America remains the Land of Opportunity in the new millennium. These are some of the ways we can make sure that every one of us has the tools to make a living in the 21st century.

But let's remember always that education doesn't just teach us how to make a living. It teaches us how to live, to value the diversity of our people and to honor our democracy. Henry Adams once said, "From cradle to grave this problem of running order through chaos, directions through space, discipline through freedom; unity through multiplicity has always been, and must always be, the task of education."

Here at Midwestern, men and women from all walks and stages of life come, ostensibly, to absorb knowledge from teachers and textbooks. But you have learned much more from each other, discovering joy and unity in your multiplicity of backgrounds, ages and life experiences. You have learned to appreciate each other not as types, but as fellow Americans, as fellow human beings. You have discovered that being American doesn't lie in the color of your skin, the holidays you celebrate, or the food you eat, but in your shared belief in the American Dream and in your willingness to work for it. And I know that if we all work together, we can make that American Dream come true for each and everyone of us.

Thank you and God Bless America.

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Remarks By the President To
Olney Central Community College

Thank-you. Thank-you very much. Thank-you Senator Mosely-Braun, Congressman Poshard, President Burke, Dick and Joanne Fessel, Dr. Murray [and other acknowledgees]. A special word of thanks to Patty Hill, the chairman of the Richland County School Board and a word of welcome to members of the Coalition for Progress.

It is a pleasure to be here in Olney today. Olney is a town that reminds me a great deal of Hope, Arkansas, a farming town founded on hard work and strong values where people look after their neighbors.

Earlier today, I saw some of Olney's famous white squirrels. Someone on my staff said we ought to bring some white squirrels back to the White House. But, Congressman Poshard said they might not survive in Washington which can be tough even on squirrels, so I guess we'll have to leave them here.

But there is something about the values and community of a small town like Olney that ought to teach us about how to live and act as a nation. You've learned that how we help one another, determines the opportunity we create for ourselves.

Today, I want to talk to you about a tremendous opportunity that we in America have as we prepare to enter the Twenty-first Century. We have a moment of peace and prosperity that gives us an extraordinary opportunity to decide what kind of future we want for America.

For the first time in a half a century, we no longer face an enemy. But as I said in my State of the Union address earlier this year, we still have an enemy, the enemy of inaction.

Usually when people feel secure and relatively prosperous, we either get happy and self satisfied and don't do anything or because we do not face big problems, we fall out with one another over small ones.

But given the stakes we face, we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be divided among ourselves. For we have an opportunity to fashion a future unlike any we have ever seen.

If you look at where we are today, you can catch a glimpse of the 21st Century. Our economy has produced over 12 million jobs in four years--something that has never happened before. We've had five straight years of falling crime. We've seen the biggest drop in the welfare rolls in American history over the last four years. Here in Illinois, unemployment has dropped to 4.8%. That's going on all over America. But there's more that we must do.

Between 1992 and the year 2000, 89% of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills. You know that in Olney where Huffy Bicycles is working with Olney Central to train people for its new distribution center. Skills are the key to participating in the new economy.

You may remember at the end of the 1980s that people worried about the decline of the middle class. Well in the last few years, inequality has started to come down. We can begin to grow the middle class again but we have to provide people with the skills to hold new jobs.

That is why our number one priority is to make America's education the best in the world.

If you go back through our history, education and opportunity have always gone hand and hand in America. Think of universal education in the 19th Century which gave America a leg up on the countries of Europe. Think of the land grant schools championed by Congressman Justin Morill which endowed the University of Illinois up in Urbana with its program of agricultural extension and made American agriculture first in the world.

But Olney illustrates how our economy is changing. Not long ago, wealth came primarily from the ground--in the form of food and oil. [Olney has oil wells scattered over farmland]. Today, crops and oil are still important but more and more wealth comes from knowledge--from trading commodity futures as people are doing in West Liberty to building telephone switches as Ameritech is doing in Lawrenceville.

And a new economy demands new skills.

Thanks to computers, we have great new ways to educate our young. The Internet offers ways to learn long distance and tap into libraries around the world. Yet despite all this new technology, too many of our children still can't read.

That is why we have to build a nation where every 8-year old can read, every 12-year old can log onto the Internet and every adult can keep on learning for his or her entire lifetime.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a ten point call to action for American education that describes the steps we have to take. Let me go over some of them.

First, we have to make sure that all of our children come to school ready to learn. Our balanced budget will expand Head Start to a million children.

We must also build new classrooms. Last week, I visited a classroom in Los Angeles where half the building was condemned. This year more children entered school than ever before. We have to create schools to educate them.

We must also put every classroom and library on Internet by 2000. Patty Hill told me that the Coalition for Progress has hooked up all of Richland County's schools to the Internet. Around the country, we're working with private industry to accomplish this goal.

We also have to open the doors of college to all. It used to be that a high school diploma was all you needed but that's no longer true. Now we have to make the 13th and 14th years of education just as universal by year 2000 as high school is today.

Through our Americorps program of national service we've created 200,000 slots for workstudy and opened 70,000 slots for college.

In addition, I've proposed reform of IRAs to enable withdrawals for higher education that combined with our proposed \$10,000 tuition credit can cut the cost of an education by 40%. And our proposed Hope scholarship provides a \$1,500 tax credit for higher education.

Changes like you've seen in Olney mean that people need to keep learning their entire lives. That's why I've proposed a GI Bill of Rights for America's Workers that takes the 70 training programs we have and combines them to give anyone who loses their job a skills grant that they can use right at their local community college such as Olney Central.

We've proposed national standards to find out how students are doing. Now some people oppose standards as some kind of power grab by the federal government. We're not proposing federal standards, just national ones. And we're proposing them for two things that should not be controversial: math and education. We also need to certify teachers.

In conclusion, as I said at the beginning of my speech, with the end of the Cold War, we have a tremendous opportunity. Our only obstacle is whether we can work together.

During the Cold War, because our future was at stake, we had a bipartisan foreign policy. Politics stopped at the water's edge. Now, we need a nonpartisan commitment to education and politics. Let's agree that politics should stop at the schoolhouse door.

Together, let's work to continue to improve education for our children. As we prepare for the 21st Century, there is no higher priority.

The Veto of the Repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban Rose Garden Statement

Just two weeks ago I spoke to the nation about the State of our Union. I said then, and I say again today, that our country stands at a pivotal moment in history. A time of peace. A time of prosperity. A time when we've been blessed with the opportunity to plan for the future. When we can lay the groundwork for our destiny.

But I tell you this: America will not reach its heights, will not live up to its great potential, if our citizens are forced to live frightened lives. Two weeks ago I talked about my plan for American education, to raise standards and broaden opportunity for our nation's children. But we will not succeed in our efforts in education, nor in technology, nor in business, if to live in America means to accept the unacceptable: to live with the kind of violence that casts a dark shadow of fear over our young ones on their way to school and over our loved ones at work and over ourselves every day.

And that is why I'm here today, joined by some of the brave men and women who are on the front lines of the fight against crime. And joined by Susan Jones, the widow of Bill Jones, a police officer who was killed two years ago. Killed with an assault weapon during a hold up of a 7-11 store. We're all here because our security is being threatened today -- not by enemies abroad, but by special interest politics here at home.

I do not wield the veto pen often, but at this moment I hold it with utter resolve and I'm grateful for the opportunity to use it. I will veto the repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban. To do less as President would be to be less of a President.

Veto - 2

Our nation cannot afford to allow this repeal to stand. Not when we know that for over 15 years these guns have been the weapons of choice for drug traffickers, street gangs and paramilitary groups.

Not when we know that in the two years since the ban was passed, crimes committed with assault weapons -- the kind of crime that killed Officer Jones -- have been reduced by 18 percent.

Not when we know that serious crime dropped another three percent last year alone and that Americans are less afraid today than they have been for a long time.

Make no mistake about it: This is not a battle over hunting guns. Those are protected and are in no danger of being taken away. This ban is exclusively directed toward guns that are meant to kill people.

Throughout this country's history, the role and size of our government has been debated. But one thing has remained clear. If nothing else, government must exist to protect its citizens. If we fail in this we have failed entirely. I will not stand by and let us fail.

I will not let us fail because I believe in this country's success. I believe these next four years will be crucial in shaping our next fifty. In these coming years we will together build a foundation strong enough to support another great American century. A century that will be marked by peace abroad -- and by prosperity and security here at home.

We cannot go back to ever-rising rates of violent crime. We cannot go back to the free manufacturing and sale of deadly assault weapons. And as long as I am President, we will not go back.

(D-1)

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT IN VETOING
THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

THE ROSE GARDEN

2:15 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: The oath of office for the President of the United States is only thirty-five words long. Yet there is no charge so grave, no pledge so serious. Twice I have said those words. Twice I have put my hand on the Bible and promised to "preserve, protect and defend" our great nation. It is to keep that promise that I now veto the repeal of the assault weapons ban.

Our forefathers traveled many paths to reach this land. But they were united in goal: they all sought freedom. For 220 years the men who have held this office have fought for many things, but their greatest fight---with foreign foe, with domestic ills, within their own souls---has been saved in defense of our freedom.

But there can be no freedom where there is fear. There is no freedom when parents are afraid to drop their children off at school, worried that someone will maim and kill them the way a gunman used an AK-47 to murder five elementary school kids a few years ago. There is no freedom when neighbors feel safer hiding behind closed doors rather than out in each other's yards for fear of gun spray from a gang member's TEK-9. Seems like you can't pick up the paper without reading about some innocent person killed because they were standing in the wrong place during a drive-by shooting. There is no freedom when police officers like Officer Bill Jones, whose widow Susan is standing here beside me, get mowed down in 7-11s by gang members with assault weapons. If we're not careful our kids are going to start thinking its better, at least safer, to be the robber when they play cops and robbers.

In the past four years we have worked hard to free Americans from fear. We put 100,000 more police officers in our communities. We told the criminals, "Three strikes? You're out." Drug dealers know that if they hurt us, we will hunt them. Sexual predators know that if they harm our children, we will give them no peace. And we banned weapons whose sole purpose is rapid-fire death.

We have seen our labor bear fruit: murders are down, rapes are down, robberies are down. Our youth are getting the message and juvenile crime, which all the experts said was about to explode, is down. America is safer and we can not, we will not, allow anyone to force us to go back to fear. To preserve, protect and defend this country from the violence that has torn apart so many communities, so many families, I will not sign this bill.

I could spend more time explaining why I have made this decision. But I think my reasons are clear and they have the help of common sense. If there is anyone we should ask for explanations, it is the men and women who overturned this law and who will now try to override my veto.

And that is what I am asking you to do now. I want these officers and their loved ones, the teachers and the convenience store owners, the parents and the elderly to do just that. Call up your Congressmen and your Senators and ask them why you should have to be afraid to let your children play in the yard. Make them tell you why you should be afraid to walk to the mailbox to get your Social Security check or to see customers come into your store.

They might try to tell you its to protect your freedom to bear arms and hunt. Well, the assault weapons ban *protects* 650 hunting weapons. I can show you the widows, the devastated parents and children; they can't show you one hunter who was hindered by this ban. If they give you this defense, ask them why they aren't more concerned with protecting your right to a long and happy life.

A-2

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE STUDENTS OF SMALLTOWN OHIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Smalltown, Ohio

JULY 22, 1996, 3:30 P.M. EDT

It is great to be back in Ohio. Whenever I come back here, I think of that beautiful, plaintive duet about your state, written by Leonard Bernstein, in his 1950s musical, *Wonderful Town*, in which two sisters move from Ohio to Manhattan in the 1930s to pursue careers in what to them seemed like a new economy. Their first apartment turns out to be a tiny, single room in Greenwich village next to where the city is blasting a hole to bury the elevated train tracks to create New York City's subway system, and homesick, the sisters reminisce about their small, midwestern town and ask: "Why? Oh, why? Oh, why, Oh!?! Why did I ever leave O-hi-o?" It's a question that I have a hard time answering whenever I return.

I enjoy getting out of Washington. Like many of you, I grew up in a small town, and I miss it a lot. Ohio always feels like home; it has a special place in Hillary's and my heart for your voters gave is the electoral college points we needed to put us over the top in 1992 and to send us to the White House. And whenever I come back here, I see old friends.

[BRIEF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS HERE OF FRIENDS IN THE AUDIENCE]

I've seen a lot of the world in the last four years, and I'm not sure that you could improve on what you have right here. A community college is a little like a Wonderful Town; schools, to me, have always seemed like extended families. They are one of the last institutions in America where, in the best circumstances, so many different people can interact. From this podium I can see mothers and fathers with small children, teenagers who look fresh out of high school, and even a few old folks, with gray hairs like me. These days we hear a lot of about the global village and the global economy. Everyone emphasizes the global part of these phrases, but today I'd like talk about the village, and how the world has come to our backyards.

Four years ago, when I took office, the World Wide Web didn't even exist. Today, in addition to my quarters in the White House, I have a home page. Were Lincoln and Douglas alive, they might conduct their historic debates in an online chat room. I may be the President of the United States, but my daughter Chelsea knows more about computers than I do. In fact she nearly knows as much as Al Gore. The Vice President, who is heading our administration's technological initiative, has promised to give me a few lessons once he's insured that our system of public education is prepared to meet demands of the 21st century. Today, any one of you can visit any of the computer centers in Ohio's community college system and hook up, via the Internet, with someone across the street or across the state or across the globe. While it's true that technology is changing our society with a rapidity that sometimes seems bewildering. These same

changes hold the potential for new for economic growth. The same innovations that threaten to rend our society into richer and poorer and the technological haves and have-nots are the same ones that us with new means of communication that can bring us closer together.

About the only thing that seems certain in this brave new world is that "continuing education," your business here, will become a lifetime pursuit. More than ever in the next century, economic advancement will go hand and hand with educational opportunity. Cutting education spending as we move into the 21st century would be like cutting defense spending at the height of the Cold War. More than half of the nation's school buildings were built before World War II. Some are still heated by coal. Some are not heated at all. It makes no sense to wire our schools for the 21st century as the masonry and ceilings crumble. Today's Democratic has pledged to help communities rebuild our educational infrastructure by providing billions of dollars to build new facilities for our children. At the same time, it's important to recognize that reforms need not all be so sweeping or so expensive as long as they're concrete: school uniforms are just one idea that we've supported that can have an enormous impact.

It's imperative that we expand opportunities to all our citizens so that they can keep pace with ever-more sophisticated technology. With that goal in mind, we reformed the student loan program, making college more affordable for some 5.5 million students. We have expanded the Pell Grant scholarships to deserving students, and through our national service program, AmeriCorps, some 40,000 Americans have earned the money they need for college by helping our communities. I am proud of these accomplishments, but we have not done enough. We should allow people to

use money from their IRAs to help pay for college. We can look to states and local communities for innovative ideas. I'd like to create a \$1,500 tax cut for Americans, modeled on Georgia's successful HOPE scholarships, to guarantee the first year at a community college such as yours. This is not a new entitlement program nor the birth of a new educational bureaucracy. Only students who can make the grade--by maintaining B average--will continue to receive their scholarships. And in economy as mobile as our own, we understand the need for national standards in education, so that kids who change schools because their parents change jobs can pick up in their new schools where they left off in their old. As it is, the chances of a child's dropping out of high school increases 2.5 percent every time his or her family relocates, regardless of family background or income, and that is wrong.

By investing in our children and in our workers, we have made America strong again. When Republicans blast big government, they're usually criticizing their own Republican party. During the years of the so-called Reagan Revolution, the deficit quadrupled as the size of government ballooned. Today's Democratic party has cut the size of the federal workforce to its smallest level in three decades. And we did this while fending off old Republican party assaults on medicare, social security, and funding for education. In 1992, Today's Democratic party promised to cut the deficit in half in four years; we not only kept our promise, we cut it even more than that. In fact, in 1995, under Today Democratic party, federal spending, as a share of the economy, was lower than in any year under Reagan or Bush.

Today's Democratic party's tough trade policies and worker investment have also begun to pay off. Wages, after years of stagnation, are finally on the rise. Under the old Republican party, America's automakers trailed Japan for thirteen years straight. In 1994, the United States surpassed Japan as the world's leader in automobile production. Under the old Republican party, America trailed Japan in semiconductor manufacture; today, we are the world's leader. The combined unemployment, inflation and mortgage rate is at its lowest level since the Great Society. Home ownership is at a fifteen-year high. And in just under three-and-a-half years, the new Democratic party has created 9.7 million new jobs; this is stronger job growth than in any Republican Administration since the really old days of the 1920s. Boy, no wonder Republicans hate government so much; compared to ours, theirs was lousy.

What this means for Ohioans is that nearly a million students or former students will benefit from student loan reforms. When you're done with your schooling, you'll be entering a robust economy; the unemployment rate in the state has dropped from seven percent to under five. Some 50,000 high-wage factory jobs have opened up in the last forty months. It is just a beginning. We have more work to do. But with your help in November, we can continue our commitment to the future, to our families, and to our children. I'm hoping you can help put Hillary and me over the top again. Thank you.

A-1

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The Oval Office
JULY 22, 1996, 10:30 A.M. EDT

More than two hundred years ago, our country's Founders created the power of the Presidential veto -- to stand guard against the excesses of Congress, and to fulfill the promises of the Preamble to the Constitution: to establish liberty and justice, to promote the general welfare, and -- perhaps most important to our mission here today -- to insure domestic tranquility and provide for the common defense. Our domestic tranquillity largely depends on the bravery of the men and women who wear the uniform of our local police forces. Those men and women routinely risk their lives to protect our homes, our families, and our children. Some of them are with us today.

[BRIEF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, EMPHASIS ON LOCAL.]

Some of the bravest officers are not here today. Their absence eloquently speaks to our purpose. Four years years ago, Bill Jones was an officer in the local police precinct of Anywhere USA. He believed in community policing. As he paroled his beat one night, he noticed an ongoing robbery at a local 7-11 convenience store and intervened. The robber, a teenage gang member not yet turned sixteen, was carrying a military-style assault weapon. When Officer Jones entered the store, the boy panicked, and in the wink of an eye, four people--Officer Jones and three others--were murdered in an unthinking hailstorm of bullets and shattered glass. His

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widow, Susan Jones, is here today. And we honor her, and the memory of her husband.

[BRIEF RECOGNITION OF SUSAN JONES]

We stand here together in common cause, for today the courageous work of these men and women, and our shared values, are again under assault.

When I took office four years ago, the battle against violent crime was being lost. In too many communities, working families lived under virtual house arrest, as gangs and drug dealers ruled their streets. Guns were openly sold to children and career criminals from the backs of flatbed trucks. Violent crime was encroaching on our schools, our places of business, and even our backyards. Too often, our government talked tough on crime, but carried a small stick.

Our administration promised to do better, and we have. For the first time in nearly a decade, we have turned the tide in our war on crime. Rates of violent crime have dropped to record lows. Two years ago, we passed the toughest crime bill in American history; in cooperation with community organizations, that bill is putting 100,000 new police officers on the streets. We have enacted tougher penalties that put more criminals longer behind bars. Civility is gradually returning to our streets and neighborhoods. We pushed through the Brady Bill. Without impinging on the rights of law-abiding Americans to bear arms, it has prevented some 60,000 former felons, fugitives, and stalkers from purchasing guns. And in 1994, we won historic legislation that barred the manufacture, import, and sale of nineteen specific models of assault weapons whose sole purpose was to murder human beings in massive bursts of military-style gunfire. (It is one of these guns that killed Bill Jones.)

This lifesaving ban has already helped to reduce violent crime. It is supported by nearly every police organization in the country and by an overwhelming majority of Americans. They are right. And the sponsors of this bill are wrong. They would subordinate the rights of victims to those

of career criminals. And at a time when rates of violent juvenile crime are still climbing, they would effectively condone the popularity of these military-style assault weapons among gang members.

I have long said I will veto this bill and I will. It is the right thing to do. And it is the moral thing to do. It sends a message of strength and determination. It strikes a necessary balance between our rights as gunowners and hunters and our responsibilities to each other. It strengthens our domestic tranquility. And it will help insure that the blessings of liberty will be there for our children. Thank you.

(B-2)

President William J. Clinton
Remarks at Anytown Community College

Entering a new century is a little bit like turning 50 -- which is something I'm now learning about. It's a time for excitement. A time for fear -- just a little. A time for a large celebration -- I hope. But, above all, it's a time to learn from our past successes and failures and move toward the future with new ideas, new strength, and new hope. And, that's exactly what this Presidential campaign should be about. Not the horse race -- who's up, who's down, who's in, who's out. Not the politics of divide and conquer. This campaign is about two very different visions for our future.

Four years ago, I ran for President because I wanted to keep the American Dream alive for every citizen who is willing to work for it. I wanted to restore our sense of community and bring America together around our shared values, instead of letting us drift apart. And, as the Cold War came to a close, I wanted us to remain the strongest force for peace and freedom in the world.

And, I believed that the only way to do all of that was to reignite the basic promise of America. To say to all our citizens, if you work hard, if you play by the rules, if you take responsibility for yourself and your family, you will have the opportunity to reach your God-given potential. Opportunity in exchange for responsibility. That is the promise that built our great country; the glue that has held us together for more than 200 years; and the engine that will propel us into the 21st century stronger and more unified than ever before.

Yet, when I became President, that promise was fading away. So, I asked the Congress to pass a bold economic plan to slash the deficit, create jobs, and put us on the road to long-term growth. Well, we passed that bill, and we did it without a single Republican vote. They called it a "job killer," they said it would "shrink the economy." And, do you know what? They were wrong, and we were right.

Today, we've cut the deficit by more than half. We've created almost 10 million new jobs. We have the smallest federal workforce since the Kennedy Administration. And, what does this mean for the people of Ohio? It means fewer citizens are unemployed and fewer businesses have closed up shop. But, do you know what Ohio has more of? More private sector jobs, more consumer confidence and more than 500,000 working families who are now receiving a tax cut. I am proud of that record -- and I know you are too -- but it's a record to build on, not rest on.

And, I believe we cannot rest until we finish putting our fiscal house in order. Yes, we must continue to eliminate wasteful spending and outdated programs. And, yes, we must balance the budget by the year 2002, but we must do it in a way that protects our families and our values. By protecting, not neglecting our environment. By keeping, not breaking, our promise of health care for our children and our seniors. And, by making sure that education remains the sturdy gateway to the American Dream. At a time when we are living in an information age and competing in a global economy, at a time when our greatest natural resources are our children's minds, we cannot mortgage our future by gutting education.

Education is our passport to the next century.

Congressman Louis Stokes once said something that I'll never forget. He was sitting next to his late brother Carl, whom I had just nominated to be an Ambassador in Africa. Both were great-grandsons of a slave. Both grew up in Ohio's public housing. Both were raised by a single mother. On the day of his brother's Senate hearing, Congressman Stokes said, "I cannot help but remark how proud our mother would be today...She believed that if we acquired education, that we could achieve in this society."

Families have always understood this. And so, for years and for generations, they have saved and sacrificed, getting by with less today so that their children could receive an education -- and get more -- tomorrow. As a nation, we must do no less.

That's why when I came to office, I didn't just talk about being the "education President." I did it. I put education first. We put education first all the way up the educational ladder. From Head Start to National Service, and from Pell Grants to direct student loans that will allow 1 million Ohio students to pay less as they study their way into the American Dream...We put education first.

Unfortunately, the Republicans in Congress have chosen a different path. They want to deny direct student loans to 2.5 million students, deny Pell Grants to almost 400,000 students, and deny assistance to more than 150,000 workers who have lost their jobs because of downsizing or the economy. And, I think that's wrong.

Some call for vouchers that would siphon American tax dollars away from public schools and funnel them into private schools. And, that's wrong. We should support public school choice and innovative charter schools -- and we have. We should make character and citizenship count -- and we have. We should set tough standards so that all schools, all students, and all teachers make the grade -- and we have. We should slash red tape and support local flexibility -- and we have. But, we will not strengthen our public schools -- or the students they serve -- by bankrupting them. That's wrong. And, we shouldn't do it.

We must move forward. And, as we do, I have a vision for the future of education in America -- a vision where we knock down all the barriers that keep young people from learning. No student can be lifted up in a school that's falling down. And, no young person should have to walk to school or class through a gauntlet of drugs and gangs and violence. I was proud that we took on the special interests and passed the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban. America is safer because of it. And as long as I am President, they will not be overturned.

I have a vision for the future of education in America -- a vision where every student in our nation has the technology, the computers and the skills they need to not only survive -- but thrive -- in the 21st century. A vision where learning and education and training are lifelong endeavors.

I have a vision for education in America -- a vision where the doors of the best higher education system in the world are flung open for every American who is willing to work for it. I don't have to tell any of you how important this is: Many of you work. Many of you have families. Many of you have returned to school. But, all of you know this: In this day and age, as the wage gap between those who attend college and those who do not continues to grow, education is an investment you cannot afford to pass up.

We need to make 14 years of education the Gold Standard for every American. That's why we have a new plan that says to any citizen who wants to go to college: We will give you a tax cut of \$1,500 to help cover your first year tuition at community college. And, we will give you the same tax cut for the second year, but only if you earn it, by getting a B average.

It's opportunity in exchange for responsibility. And, it's called America's Hope, because, just like the GI Bill, it's for our entire country. Families are stronger, communities are stronger and America is stronger when more Americans go to college. I'll never forget the pride I felt when my mother went back to school. All children need their parents to pass down lessons of right and wrong, lessons of reading and writing, lessons of discipline and commitment.

That's the kind of commitment that we are seeing in Atlanta today -- as citizens from all over the globe stand united by the spirit of teamwork and the quest for victories -- victories that are shared by all of us. In fact, America's first medal went to a swimmer named Angel Martino. And, I'm told that she immediately gave it to a young athlete who is battling cancer, telling her, "I think you're a hero. Keep fighting."

I hope all of you will keep fighting. For your families. For your communities. For our future. America works best when it works together. And, if we stand together and work together today, I know that our best days are yet to come.

Thank you. And, God bless you all.

Education and the Economy
A Speech Delivered to a Midwestern Community College

Years ago, when many of our grandparents and great grandparents arrived on the shores of our nation, they stepped onto this land eager to experience for themselves a wondrous thing they'd heard about called the American Dream. They arrived here, not looking for hand-outs or gold cards, but simply looking for a chance. A chance to lift themselves and their families up into a better station in life. A chance to improve themselves, relying on nothing more than their own ingenuity and skill and sweat.

They chose to come here because America promises what no other nation on earth offers in such abundance: Opportunity.

Today our nation faces the challenges of a whole new world. A new economy where our competitors aren't just across the street, but across the globe. A new economy where a nation's greatest asset isn't its factories, which are today mobile, but its skilled workforce, which is fixed.

I'm here today to talk to you -- young men and women in college and in high school -- because you understand better than most that the key to opportunity in this new world is education.

Two weeks ago in the State of the Union Address, I laid out my Call To Action for American Education. This plan sets the stage for the kind of educational opportunity necessary for a nation and a people prepared to make the most of the century to come. These are not abstract principles, but are practical and achievable goals. Goals that we must, as a nation, begin to achieve right now. Why?

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Because, we are living during an extraordinary moment in our nation's history. A moment of both abundance and peace. A moment that will not stand still, but that for now offers itself as a great canvas upon which our national destiny can be drawn.

Never before in the history of this country have we been blessed with such riches. Over the past four years we've created economic growth by investing in our people. We've cut the deficit in half and have created over 11 million new jobs. While much of Europe is facing record inflation and joblessness, our own inflation rate remains low and our unemployment is under 6 percent.

But you know, and I know, that now's no time to stop. We have to take the next steps to ensure growth and economic opportunity for you -- the next generation of American workers.

You, about to enter the job market, are seeing first-hand the kind of change that is happening all around us. You know that the new economy does not value the same skills and resources it once did.

The new engines of productivity in America run on knowledge instead of strength. Where once an American could make a good living with very little training at an auto assembly plant, today there are fewer of those jobs. Instead, workers, including auto workers, need computer skills. They need to be able to collaborate in teams. They need to be innovative in creating new paths to greater efficiency.

In the new economy the entry level jobs that years ago were in manufacturing plants are today in data processing. Computer literacy is a prerequisite. And the consequences of not being prepared are severe. Those without a high school education risk joblessness. Those without a college education are falling further behind in wages.

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As Americans, we are poised to take our place in the new economy as the most skilled, the most educated, the most efficient workers in the world. But for us to succeed in this great international competition, we must be prepared -- and we must get prepared now. Here's how I think we can do it:

First, and most important, we must set high national standards for our children. Fourteen years ago, our nation's education system was called "a rising tide of mediocrity." Since then, our country's leaders have spent a lot of time talking about what to do to cure the problems of our schools, but we must go much further. We must set high national standards so that we can finally give our children the guidance they deserve when they put their fates in our hands every day in the simple act of going to class.

Then, we must make sure our teachers are equipped to lift our children to these new heights. We can do that by training and certifying our teachers so that they are the best in the world. And they must be prepared to teach character and citizenship as well as math and science.

We must help our children read. Right now 40 percent of our eight-year-olds are not reading at their grade level. We all know that reading not only prepares our children for the workforce, but prepares them for life by opening their minds to new ideas and stories and worlds. We'll build a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors to make sure every child can read independently by the end of the third grade.

But we must also improve learning even before schooling begins. We'll do this by expanding Head Start and by encouraging parents to begin reading and talking to their children at the earliest stages of life.

Education - 4

We must foster competition and innovation in schools by giving parents the power to choose the right public school for their child. And we must commit federal and state and local money to rebuild those schools. It's hard for our children to study when the ceiling is crumbling above their heads or they are forced to sit elbow to elbow with classmates in cramped trailers. We can do better.

We must take advantage of modern technology, the Internet, so that the same bank of information and knowledge available to a student in Beverly Hills is available to a student in the Bronx.

And finally, we must give more Americans the opportunity to sharpen their skills and broaden their learning throughout their lives by making it easier for them to go to college and to go back to school as adults. We will create an environment in which at least two years of college is the norm. An environment in which no American is forced to do without a college education because he or she simply can't afford it. To accomplish this, I've proposed a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition -- enough to pay for most community colleges, like this one. And I've asked for a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school. Will this help more people go to college? You bet it will.

This is an exciting time to be an American. The national landscape faced by our ancestors has changed, but the opportunity that they saw, glistening like gold on our shores, remains. And the spirit that they left us -- the drive and ambition, the ability to rise to a challenge, the courage to start anew -- is what spurs us on now and is what will ensure that we achieve success in this new world of ours. A world where the American dream of opportunity is a reality that lives on.

END

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SPEECH 2 -- EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY

A hundred years ago, a young man named Walt Whitman was beginning his career as a poet. At the time no one could imagine he would become one of America's great writers. But Whitman had faith in himself, so he sent off a sheaf of unpublished poetry to Ralph Waldo Emerson, asking for his comments. Emerson, already a literary giant, took the time to read the poems and sent back this letter to the aspiring writer: "Dear Mr. Whitman, I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

To those college and high school students here today, it is my pleasure to greet you at the beginning of your own great careers.

I can say this with confidence because, for those willing to work hard and go to school, the future may never have been brighter. Today, America's schools are strong, our commitment to education is steadfast, and our classrooms teach more diverse skills than ever before. If you are ambitious and willing to take on the challenges of education, there are careers, opportunities, and good paychecks out there for you.

It wasn't always so. I'm sure parents here remember that not long ago conventional wisdom said the biggest growth in America would be in minimum-wage jobs. A college graduate, flipping hamburgers for \$3 an hour and living at home, was the poster child some held out for young people in the '90s. In fact, an important book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, wondered if America's best days weren't behind her, including a chapter titled, "The United States: The Problem of Number One in Relative Decline."

But let me tell you, people had good reasons to be uncertain of the future. Five and ten years ago we were running up a federal budget deficit like there was no tomorrow. We were rich in foreclosures and bankruptcies, poor in optimism and confidence. Interest rates were so high that a new car was out of reach for many working families, let alone a college tuition.

American's warhorse industries, like autos and steel that built the Midwest, were facing more competition than ever before while cutting-edge, high-tech firms overseas were putting technology we invented to better use. Our competitors were eager to pick up the mantle of economic leadership that appeared too heavy a burden for America.

As the saying goes: that was then, this is now. America is again the engine that drives the world's economy -- the finest innovator, the greatest exporter, the strongest competitor. We have regained the World Economic Forum's title of Most Productive Economy by making the tough choices; cutting our budget deficit by more than 60 percent, embracing opportunities in the global economy rather than isolating from it, encouraging entrepreneurship, and streamlining our government. Unemployment is at its lowest in seven years, a record number of new businesses have been started, incomes are rising, and we've had the largest increase in home-ownership ever.

Much of the credit for a resurgent America goes, deservedly, to business leaders, working men and women, and decision-makers throughout government. But let me tell you the other part of this equation for success -- education.

Today, 76 million Americans -- 40 percent of adults -- are enrolled in some continuing education classes. That's up from 30 percent just five years ago. These are working men and women who understand skills and technology are evolving as never before and that a career doesn't mean just showing up at work every day -- it means knowing more a year from now than you do today; it means having better skills than a person in Japan, China, Germany, Brazil or elsewhere who wants to do your job.

And today, there is a greater percentage of young people enrolled in college than ever before. I believe this is the product not just of good schooling, but also of college education being more accessible than ever before. In the last four years, we have lowered the cost and improved the reach of the college loan program, added 200,000 slots to work-study plans, and opened up almost 70,000 slots for college through the AmeriCorps national service program.

It's a good start, but that's what it is -- a start.

Understand that projections for the future say 89 percent of new jobs will require more than a high school education. That is why I want to open the schoolhouse doors even wider -- because the single most important thing we can do for our young people and our own economic vitality is to give every single American the chance to go to college.

To begin, we must make at least two years of college just as universal as a high school education is today. To achieve this, I have proposed a \$1,500 a year tuition tax credit -- a HOPE Scholarship -- for the first two years of college, so that the typical community college education can be a reality for every American.

I have also proposed that every working family should be able to deduct up to \$10,000 in college tuition costs per year for education after that. And I believe mothers and fathers should be able to save money for their kids' college tuitions in tax-free IRAs -- put a little bit away, week by week, year by year, earning interest, and withdraw it for college education without any penalties.

For those already in the workforce, I want a new G.I. Bill for American Workers -- a \$2,600 grant for unemployed and underemployed Americans so that they can get the skills they need to go back to work at better paying, more secure jobs.

God bless every family now cutting corners to send a son or daughter to college. But I don't want mothers and fathers to lose sleep as the next tuition payment comes due or to neglect family needs for the sake of college expenses. And I don't want one worker forsaking a computer or management class because it's unaffordable or one kid dropping out of college because of money worries.

We should make it as easy as possible for families to save and send a child to college -- we should not tax the money working families spend on college educations -- and we should

support lifetime learning for working men and women. It is ambitious, I know; but it is part and parcel of our belief that the essence of America is to excel, to achieve, and to surpass the standards set by those before us.

America's growth as a world power -- through two World Wars, the Cold War, and now as the leader of the global economy -- has been mirrored by greater and greater commitments to education. At the beginning of this century, only 6.4 percent of Americans had more than a grade school education -- and the U.S. Commissioner of Patents at the time was telling the country, "Everything that can be invented has been invented." By 1980, when two-thirds of the workforce had high school diplomas, more than two hundred patents a day were being issued. It is no coincidence that as we have expanded education, we have grown, innovated, and prospered. Now we are pushing the bar higher, so that a college education is the standard and continuing education is commonplace. These are investments in America -- investments in skilled workers, investments in employable young people, investments in the competitive advantage of a workforce with capabilities second to none, and investments in your own great careers -- that will pay dividends throughout the nation, our economy, and all of your lives.

Thank you and God bless you.

It always makes me happy to be among such a fine group of America's young people, and among those nurturing them. Teachers and parents don't get enough recognition for the good work they do to ensure our nation's future. And I know you young people are working hard, too. Keep it up.

Working hard is what made America. It is what has brought us the peace and prosperity we enjoy today. By working hard we have finally reduced the size of federal government by more than 10 percent. We have eliminated hundreds of programs, thousands of pages of regulations, privatized more operations than any previous administration, and cut the deficit by 60 percent in four years.

During that same time span, our economy has produced 12 million jobs, which is unprecedented for a four-year period. We have replaced a welfare system that trapped generation after generation in a cycle of dependency with new programs that make responsibility a way of life. As a result, there are more than 2 million fewer people on welfare today than when I took office.

And that's just a start. We won't be satisfied until we achieve a balanced budget that does not ignore the promises made to our parents and our children who depend on Medicare and Medicaid. But that, too, is going to take hard work.

We won't be satisfied until America is well positioned to face the challenges of the new century with an even stronger economy that will give our people better chances to live out their dreams than at any other time in human history.

This is no time to be complacent, to become satisfied with the unprecedented tranquility and well-being we enjoy today. We have been given an opportunity almost unique in American history to fashion a future that will embrace everyone in this country. We must not let this opportunity pass.

One of the biggest challenges facing us is to create a world-class education system that reaches every child in every state of this nation. We must dramatically reform our public schools, demanding high standards and accountability from every teacher and every student.

Innovations such as public choice, school choice and charter schools should be encouraged. But as these grass-roots reforms occur, and local control of the schools is maintained, we need to develop a system of measurement that can be used nationally to determine how well our children are learning in every state.

Nearly eight years ago, as governor of Arkansas, I had the privilege of helping put together the National Education Goals. In shorthand, we said this nation should do four things -- make sure every 8-year-old is able to read, every 12-year-old is able to log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old is able to go to college, and every adult is able to keep learning for an entire lifetime.

My balanced budget commits \$51 million next year toward reaching these goals. But far more than money is required. That's why I have issued a Call to Action for American Education that is based on 10 principles. You have likely heard about these ideas by now, but I think it's important that we go over them again.

First, we need a national crusade for education standards. I didn't say federal government standards, I said national standards. Every state and school should fashion its curriculum to reflect these standards and train teachers so they can lift students to them.

Second, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has worked very hard with educators and public officials to establish nationally accepted credentials for

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excellence in teaching. But only 500 teachers have been certified since 1995. My budget will enable 100,000 more to seek national certification as master teachers. And as we reward them, we should quickly and fairly remove those who don't measure up.

Third, 40 percent of our 8-year-olds cannot read and that just won't do. Through our America Reads initiative we are recruiting 1 million volunteer tutors who will help make sure every child can read independently by the third grade. We want 100,000 college students to help, and already 60 college presidents have pledged their schools' participation.

As part of our fourth principle, which recognizes that learning begins in the first days of life, the First Lady and I are going to convene a White House Conference on Early Learning and the Brain this spring. And my balanced budget will expand the Head Start program to reach 1 million children by 2002.

Fifth, we want every state to give parents the power to choose the right public school for their children. And to give parents more choices we have a plan that will help America create 3,000 new charter schools by the next century. That's seven times as many as there are now.

Sixth, we must bring character education back to our schools. Children must be taught order and discipline and how to be good citizens. Truancy laws must be enforced, disruptive students removed from the classroom. Guns and drugs must not be tolerated.

We cannot expect children to raise themselves up in schools that are overcrowded or falling down. As part of our seventh principle, our budget will commit \$5 billion to help communities finance \$20 billion in school construction over the next four years.

Eighth, we want to establish America's HOPE Scholarship, which will provide two years of a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition. That's enough for the typical junior college, but I have also proposed a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school, an expanded IRA that you can withdraw from tax-free for education, and the largest increase in Pell Grant scholarships in 20 years.

To make it easier for adults to continue learning and qualify for the jobs of the future, we want Congress to stop sitting on the G.I. Bill for American Workers, which will transform the confusing jumble of federal training programs into a simple skill grant that goes directly to the worker who needs it.

Finally, we have challenged America to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by 2000 to make sure no child, whether in an isolated rural town, an affluent suburb or an inner-city neighborhood, is denied access to the same universe of knowledge.

These 10 areas where America must work harder to improve the education it provides its children reflect what I have learned over the years in dealing with this issue. I have spent a lot of time in our schools, a lot of time listening to teachers, listening to parents. They have made me realize how important this topic is to the future of our nation.

Education is the great equalizer. It provides the opportunity for a poor boy from Arkansas or a shy girl from Michigan to overcome whatever stumbling blocks there may be in their lives and fulfill their greatest dreams.

America is the great nation it is because of the opportunities it provides all of its citizens. But for them to take advantage of those opportunities, they must have the ability to learn what other children can. There is no greater challenge facing this nation than the improvement of its schools. We must all work hard to see that they succeed.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADDRESS

G-2

Today we stand at a unique moment in our history. As the sun sets on an era tempered by the Cold War, we look to a new century to provide us with new challenges and new hope.

We begin a time when knowledge and the promise of information lay the foundation of our success.

We as Americans are singularly capable of taking advantage of this opportunity. We are the only superpower on the planet. Our economy has seen unprecedented growth. 12 million new jobs. Declining welfare rolls. New heights in free trade. New progress toward a balanced budget. The smallest federal work force in 35 years.

We are a nation ready to take advantage of its strength, but only if we understand our place in history. No longer can we rely on foreign threats to inspire us. We can meet the challenges of a new time only from within. The fear of complacency is threat enough.

Between 1992 and 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills - yet only half the people entering the work force have these skills.

Our education system needs to meet the challenges of this knowledge economy, and our political system must be the inspiration for - not the enemy of - change. Our future in the new world is at stake. The education of our children is at stake. Politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

The Vice President and I have traveled the country, challenging our states, our communities and our families to produce students who thrive in the 21st century. Today I

challenge you - parents, teachers and students alike - to prepare yourselves and your children. If we meet the education challenges of today, we will meet the global challenges of tomorrow.

We set some modest goals to start our journey forward. Imagine. Imagine if every 8-year-old could read, every 12-year-old could log onto the Internet, every 18-year-old could go to college and every adult could learn for a lifetime. Imagine what our country could do.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a 10-point plan, a call to action for American education, an ambitious agenda that goes from early childhood to adult learning.

Let me touch on some of the points before I focus on a few.

We must study the learning patterns of early childhood and set our children on a course of lifetime learning. We must train one million volunteers to help every child read by age 8. We must make a small investment to rebuild the schools that literally are falling apart.

We must inspire reform through public school choice and charter schools. Giving parents the right to choose provides incentive for our schools to work harder.

We must teach children citizenship and complement character education with community curfews, truancy prevention and initiatives that promote a disciplined learning environment.

We must connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000, giving everyone access to the World Wide Web of information. We must make it easy for adults to return to school by offering flexible skills grants for education and training.

I want to detail three more points in this call to action - three points that affect all of you.

First, we must increase access to college for everyone. Access to college now means access to the global economy later. My friends in the space program like to say, "the higher your education, the higher your elevation."

We want to make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as high school. Our HOPE scholarship plan provides a \$1500 tax credit for two years, enough to pay for a community college like this one.

We are also proposing a yearly tax deduction of \$10,000 for higher education, an expanded, tax-free IRA for tuition and the largest Pell Grant increase in 20 years.

I know the high school students here today are thinking about the high cost of college - and the college students here, well, you already know. But know this too: you can make no better investment in your future than education. With a little help from us and a lot of hard work from you, you will reap the rewards of higher education for a lifetime.

Second, we must hold our children to high standards. The parents here know: when we expect more from our children, we get more from our children.

We are leading an effort to develop national standards - not federal government standards - to provide our children with a knowledge base for the century ahead.

To ensure that the standards are met, we want every state to test fourth graders in reading and eighth graders in math by 1999.

These standards are voluntary. But I wouldn't want to be the governor of a state that said no to challenging our children. I wouldn't want to find out too late that the kids in my state lagged behind others.

The only goal of standards is to pass - to demonstrate basic language and math skills. Some will not pass. But the parents here today should know that standards will tell you where your kids need help. In the end, standards will elevate our children, and all of us will be more secure in the years ahead.

Third, we must help our teachers excel in the classroom. Effective teachers produce effective citizens.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has developed standards for teacher excellence. Teachers who improve their skills can gain certification as master teachers. To date only 500 have been certified.

Our budget provides enough funding to certify 100,000 master teachers. We hope to have a well-trained master teacher in every school in America, sharing his or her skills and lifting the quality of classroom instruction.

We should reward master teachers and others who make a unique contribution to the classroom. I would like to thank the teachers here today for the choice you made. I can think of no more noble calling than to shape the hearts and minds of our young people.

I believe our call to action for American education can make a difference. But it won't matter how we do our jobs in Washington if you don't do your job right here.

Each of you has a responsibility to take the tools that government provides and carve out a section of the knowledge economy - whether you're a parent reading to a newborn, a ninth grader studying algebra or a college student who wants to start a business.

Take advantage of the opportunity of our time. Enter the new world with confidence and the understanding that we live at the dawn of America's brightest day.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT WABASH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

One of the great privileges of being President is that I get the opportunity to travel all over this country and meet groups of young people like you. Your energy and creativity help to fuel our nation's growth, and your futures are our most precious resources.

That is what I have come here to talk about today -- your futures, the role that education must play in them, and the impact that will have on our economy. For it is no secret to you -- students, teachers and parents -- that educational excellence is the key to ensuring that your futures are rich in opportunity. We live in the age of the global information economy, an age in which success requires knowledge, in which education and training are the keys to prosperity.

In this Information Age, the strength of our economy is inextricably bound to the knowledge and capacity of our people. Right now, our economy is strong. Since 1992, we have produced 12 million jobs. That was unprecedented growth over a four-year period. Our welfare rolls have declined, and our science and technology have leapt ahead at astounding speeds.

Yet the numbers also tell a sobering tale about the task we face. Between 1992 and 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require literacy and math skills beyond the high school level. As it stands now, only half of the people entering the work force will be prepared for these high-skill, high-paying jobs. Without expanding our educational opportunities, we will soon be unable to expand our economy.

To prepare for the knowledge economy of the 21st century, we must give all Americans the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. To do that, we must work together to meet some basic educational goals: every 8-year-old must be able to read; every 12-year-old must be able to log onto the Internet; every 18-year-old must be able to go to college; and every adult American must be able to keep on learning for a lifetime.

At the beginning of this term, I issued a challenge to the nation to meet those goals and ensure that every American has the best education in the world. That challenge begins with our national leadership, in my Administration and in Congress. Educational excellence must be our number one priority, and for the next four years it certainly will be mine.

There are those who say we cannot afford to take the steps needed to achieve our educational goals. I say we cannot afford not to. The costs of a national crusade for better education pale in comparison to the costs of allowing America's education to founder. Indeed, our economic prosperity in the 21st century depends on the commitment of our national leadership to educational excellence.

That effort must be united; we cannot allow our crusade for education to become mired in petty partisanship. During the Cold War, when our national security was threatened by communism, politics stopped at the water's edge. Today, when our national security depends

upon our ability to compete and win in the global economy, politics must stop at the schoolhouse door.

In the balanced budget that I submitted to Congress, my Administration made an unprecedented commitment to educational excellence, devoting \$51 billion to education this year alone. But far more than money and federal effort is required. Our commitment to education must extend beyond Washington -- it must be joined in the legislative halls and city halls, the corporate boards and school boards, and the classrooms and family rooms throughout America.

In my State of the Union address, I described a 10-point plan, a Call to Action for American Education, that describes the steps we must take together if we are to achieve our goals. That plan is central to my vision for our education and our economy, and I want to touch on a few of those points today.

First, we must have genuine, national standards for student performance, representing the levels of education that our students must reach to compete effectively in the knowledge economy. By the time we reach 1999, the threshold to the 21st century, every state should have adopted high national standards. Every school should be testing 4th graders in reading and 8th graders in math to make sure that those standards are met.

We must also have standards for our teachers, rewarding the best with master teacher certification and fairly removing those few who do not make the grade.

But teachers cannot do it alone. Forty percent of our 8-year-olds cannot read on their own, and the America Reads initiative will try to mobilize a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors to turn that around in the next two years. We want at least 100,000 of those volunteers to be college students -- that means that America Reads wants you. I hope every student at Wabash and all the surrounding high schools will consider pitching in and helping to teach a child to read.

In order to provide a solid education, the foundations for learning must be strong. That means we must teach character education in our schools and instruct students on how to be good citizens. It also means that the classrooms themselves must have strong foundations, and we must devote the resources necessary to repair our crumbling schools. We must also lay the foundation for the Information Age, by connecting every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000.

To ensure that no one gets left behind on our journey into the 21st century, we must do more to provide quality education beyond high school. I have asked Congress to pass the America's HOPE Scholarship program, which would provide a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, enough to pay for school at a community college like Wabash. I have also asked for a tax deduction for education, an IRA for education, and expanded Pell Grants, all of which will help make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as high school education is today. We

must make Wabash, her sister community colleges, and the four-year colleges and universities of this nation accessible to all Americans who work hard.

Finally, the doors of learning should not swing shut at any age. That's why my G.I. Bill for America's Workers will help equip eligible workers with new skills. Many will be able to use the wonderful resources of community colleges like this one to help launch them onto new paths into the future.

If we work together, we can meet the challenge of educational excellence. We can, and we must. For the quality of American education impacts far more than the opportunities available to individuals; it goes to the very vibrancy of our economy.

The call to excellence in education therefore must be heard by everyone, because everyone has a stake. Throughout our history we have shown that when Americans chart a united course, nothing can stop us. United, we can help ensure that our economy is equipped for the 21st century and that no American is denied the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you and God bless you.

Speech on Education and Economy at Midwestern College

WORD COUNT: 1198

Thank you very much. It's wonderful to be here with all of you at this great institution. I'm also happy to see you high school students and especially your parents, because it's so important that parents play an active role in their children's education. And, of course, it's always a pleasure to be in America's heartland, especially when I get to speak on an issue that's so close to my own heart--education.

1997 actually marks a milestone in the history of American education. Four hundred years ago, the colony of Massachusetts passed the very first American education law. It required that every town of at least 50 people hire a teacher of reading and writing. Those first colonists, huddled in their tiny villages along the Atlantic coast, understood the importance of education for their children, and for their communities. And ever since, making ourselves the best educated nation on earth has always been the very essence of our American dream.

But today, that dream seems to be fading. Many of our students are simply not receiving a quality education. Many more are unprepared for college. And still others, who are prepared, can't attend college because they can't afford the skyrocketing costs. This is intolerable. We're squandering our country's most precious national resource--our children. And not only does it hurt the individual, it also hurts our nation.

The industrial age has given way to the information age and, more than ever before, our economic strength depends on a well educated work force. By the year 2000, 60% of all new jobs in America will require advanced technology skills. But a recent report from the Oregon Employment Department shows that firms in that state already can't find enough workers with certain computer, engineering or technical skills. It's the same in many places, businesses are struggling to fill certain positions because candidates too often lack the education to make the grade. If our firms and factories are to find the educated workers they need, and if these same firms are to remain competitive in the global marketplace, then you students must receive the necessary training and skills. Our economic future depends on it.

If we're to meet tomorrow's economic challenges, we must make our educational system the envy of the world. But how? My answer is simple, and it's one that I hope Hillary won't mind. As you may know, my wife has written that it takes an entire village to raise a child. Well, I believe that it takes an entire community to educate a child. And this means prepared students, involved parents, and an engaged government. Let me explain.

During my State of the Union Address, I unveiled my 10 step plan, Call to Action for American Education. It's a blueprint for guaranteeing that every child receives a quality education, and that every student who has the ability to attend college also has the opportunity. And within its 10 points are found the answers of how we prepare, involve and engage.

If we're to adequately prepare our students, we need--above all--national standards that truly represent what our children must know to succeed in this information age. Every state should adopt high national standards and, by 1999, should test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math. These tests aren't meant to be barriers, but bridges to a better future. They'll show who needs help and how we can improve our schools.

But if our children need standards, so do our teachers. My Call to Action plan and my budget call for 100,000 teachers to seek certification, from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, as master teachers. And let's reward you good teachers.

Complementing this, I've also requested \$5 billion to help communities finance \$20 billion in necessary school construction over the next four years. National standards, better teachers, adequate school buildings, taken together, they'll ensure that our students are prepared for the economic challenges of the future.

But even if our students are prepared, we need involved parents--all of you--as well as all community members. You can't stop caring about schools once your children are grown. In my plan, I've asked for a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors to ensure that every child can read independently by the end of the 3rd grade. Join this army. Or if you're looking for other ways to become involved, let me share with you parents a story from New Jersey.

Last year, I challenged America to connect every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000, and bring the power of the information age into all of our schools. Responding to that challenge, volunteers, parents and corporate citizens came together for “Net Day New Jersey”. On four Saturdays last October, 200 schools in some of that state’s poorest inner cities were wired to the Internet. Corporations like IBM and Johnson & Johnson paid for the infrastructure, and volunteers, in overalls and painter’s hats, did the actual wiring. As I’ve stated in my Call to Action plan, let’s all get involved in efforts like this and ensure that the information highway is a little more accessible to our children.

But even when our students are prepared, and their parents are involved, many families simply can’t afford college. And that’s why government must remain engaged. As part of my plan, I proposed America’s HOPE Scholarship. Under this initiative, I want two years of a \$1,500 tax credit for college tuition, enough to pay for a community college like this one. This would make the 13th and 14th years of education just as universal in the 21st century as a high school education is in the 20th century. I also want a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for all tuition after high school; an expanded IRA you can withdraw from, tax free, for education, and the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years. This isn’t a national expense; it’s a national investment. And if anyone says that this program is too expensive, I say remember Sputnik.

Forty years ago this fall, we saw Russia’s Sputnik, the first earth orbiting satellite, and feared that our educational system was lagging behind the Soviet’s. Our government

responded with an almost unprecedented interest--and investment--in our nation's schools. We can't do less today. Although we aren't facing a political challenge, we're certainly facing the economic challenge of ensuring a well educated, well skilled work force. And we can meet that challenge only if our students are prepared, our parents involved, and our government engaged.

As we approach the 21st Century, a quality education for all isn't a national luxury, it's a national necessity. And it isn't an alien notion, it's national birthright. Because ever since the Massachusetts colony passed that first education law, making ourselves the best educated nation on earth has always been the very essence of our American dream. As individuals we mustn't forget that there's always more to be learned; always more to be seen; always more to be explored. And as a nation--a national community--we must ensure that this particular American dream is always an American reality.

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO HOOCHIE-COOCHIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Thank you so much for inviting me here today.

Thank you to the teachers and students from Hoochie-Coochie. You sure do know how to throw a party! And thank you to the students and parents from nearby high schools. As you think about college, I'm sure you find it reassuring that one of our best community colleges is right down the road.

On my drive over to this wonderful auditorium, I noticed a sign-up sheet on your Student Union Building for an intramural basketball tournament. I was all ready to stop the motorcade and run over -- until I remembered that I won't be doing much "running" for awhile. But I'll make a deal with you: If you'll have me back when I'm all healed, I'll give you all a good look at my jump-shot.

Do we have a deal?

Thank you.

I have visited many colleges over the last four years -- including some in this great state of Ohio -- and I've loved every one of them. I love the feel of a college campus -- the energy, the enthusiasm, the sense of unlimited possibilities. I remember feeling all of those things as a college student -- not too many years ago.

In some sense, my generation envies yours. All of you are entering a world of extraordinary change, of lightning-fast computers and global communications and other breathtaking technology that will give more of you a chance to live out your dreams than in any time in human history.

But these sweeping technological changes also present new challenges. And it's those challenges -- and what we need to do to prepare for them -- that I want to talk to you about today.

Think for a moment about the changes that are occurring all around you here in Ohio. Over a hundred years ago, the factories that sprung up in Cleveland, Cincinnati, and elsewhere gave strength to the Industrial Revolution. Millions of Americans, many of them with little education, left their farms to find new opportunities in our growing cities. The story was no different in New York and Boston... in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia... and in Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee.

Our manufacturing centers continue to offer good jobs to many Americans. And we're proud of that. In fact, our economy has produced 12 million new jobs in four years -- the most ever in a four-year period. In Ohio, alone, the economy has produced xx,xxx new jobs and unemployment has dropped to x.x percent. We've cut the Federal deficit by nearly two-thirds, and my budget plan would finish the job and balance the budget. That would bring down interest rates and make our economy even stronger.

But if you drive through Cleveland and Cincinnati these days, and through the surrounding suburbs, the landscape is increasingly dominated not by large factories, but by hundreds of high-tech companies. And here's the important point: More and more, the jobs that these companies offer require technical skills.

From 1992 to the year 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created will require more than high-school levels of literacy and math. But only half the people entering the workforce are prepared for them. Our schools are turning out millions of young people who are not ready for the new world of work.

Education is quickly becoming the dividing line between those who make it and those who don't. Those who have skills for the new jobs are moving ahead. Those without them are falling behind.

So, what are we going to do?

In my State of the Union address, I outlined a 10-point plan of action for education. The idea is to create a world-class education system in which Americans of all ages can get ready for the jobs of tomorrow. We have to see that every 8-year-old can read independently, every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old can go to college, and every adult can keep learning for a lifetime.

I want all children to come to school ready to learn; that's why I've proposed to expand Head Start. I want families to have as much opportunity as possible to improve their schools; that's why I've proposed to fund more charter schools. I want to make sure that children learn in schools that are not falling apart; that's why I've proposed a new program to support more investment in school construction and renovation. And I want to make sure that children are learning what they need to know; that's why I've worked hard to create national standards for language and math.

But we need to do more than improve education for grades 1 to 12. All of you know the financial burdens that college can impose. Many of you are working to pay your way -- and I applaud you for your commitment. In the last four years, we've made college more affordable -- by lowering the costs of student loans, expanding work-study, and opening up slots for college through our national service program.

But we need to do more. We need to make sure that every American who wants to go to college can afford to go -- whether here at Hoochie-Coochie or somewhere else. In fact, we need to make two years of education after high school as universal by the year 2000 as a high school diploma is today.

And we can do that. My budget plan proposes a \$1,500-a-year HOPE scholarship that would cover the typical costs of tuition at a community college. As you know, that would fully cover tuition costs here at Hoochie-Coochie. To get the credit in the second year, students would have to earn at least a B average in their first year. The point is that if you do your part, we'll do ours.

My budget also proposes a \$10,000-a-year tax deduction for the costs of any education after high school; an expanded IRA so that families can withdraw money tax-free if they use it for higher education; another 100,000 work study slots; and the largest increase in Pell Grants in 20 years.

As you may know, my economic team is meeting with the leaders of Congress' budget committees to reach an agreement on balancing the budget. But we have to balance the budget the right way. We have to cut waste while still investing in the future. And there's no wider path to the future than through education.

Let me tell you what I've told my economic team: I will not accept a budget that does not provide tax relief to help middle-income families send their children to college or other education after high school. We can balance the budget and still do all that. And we must.

Our history as a nation is rich with stories about the challenges that we have faced and overcome -- the challenges of winning a war and securing the peace, of expanding opportunity at home, and of exploring the heavens.

Now, we face another challenge of equal magnitude -- the challenge of educating our people for a world of limitless opportunity but fierce competition. The question is: Will we step aside and avoid the challenge? Or, as we have done so many times before, will we once again confront the task together?

If we do the right thing, we can see to it that your generation enjoys everything that the future has to offer.

I'm betting that we will.

Thank you, and God bless you.

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REMARKS FOR MIDWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Thank you for that very warm welcome. It feels great to be here.

I've come to Midwestern Community College today to talk about a subject that's been a priority -- some have called it an obsession -- of mine for as long as I've held public office. I've come to talk about education, about the importance of providing all Americans opportunities for lifelong learning, and about what we all must do as a nation to strengthen our schools and expand access to our colleges and universities.

And I've come to talk about it here, at Midwestern Community College, because I believe that the future of this town, of this state, of our nation, and of our democracy depend on institutions of higher learning just like this one.

For decades, our community colleges have been vital guardians of the American Dream, keepers of the cherished promise that in America, anyone who is willing to work and study hard can get the education he or she needs to build a better life.

This community college, like so many others across the country, has opened the doors of learning and opportunity for millions who once thought a higher education was out of reach. I know I'll find in any of these classrooms single mothers training for jobs that will free them from the welfare rolls; veteran office and factory workers returning to school for the new high-tech skills of the Information Age; immigrants learning to speak the language of their new country; 18-year olds preparing to transfer to four-year colleges; and a host of other citizens working hard to meet the challenges of the future.

As all of you -- the students, faculty and staff of Midwestern -- are showing us, education in America doesn't have to be a one-shot deal. Instead, it can be a lifelong process.

The principles that lie at the core of the American community college's mission -- that opportunities for learning must be available to all who are willing to work and study hard; and that those opportunities be available at all stages of life -- must be at the core of our efforts to prepare all Americans for the 21st century.

As we enter a new, increasingly high-tech, fast-paced global economy, where American workers will find themselves competing for jobs with peers from Beijing to Berlin, our ability to keep up with the rapidly changing demands of the workplace will become even more important than ever.

While the new economy has brought unprecedented opportunities for Americans, it has also demanded a whole new set of skills that many people who completed their educations thirty, twenty, ten, or even five years ago just do not have. Between 1992 and the year 2000, 89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and

math skills. Today, even though more than 80 percent of our children are graduating from high school, more than half of all Americans entering the workforce lack these skills.

What does this mean? It means that the American Dream is in jeopardy. Too many of our fellow Americans -- from our newly minted high school graduates to men and women with dozens of years in the workforce -- are not prepared to seize the countless opportunities of the new millennium.

That is why I've made strengthening our educational system -- so that Americans of all ages who are willing to work hard can get the knowledge and skills they need to survive and thrive -- my primary goal as president these next four years. In my State of the Union address, I described a 10-point Call to Action for American Education that supports, preserves and expands opportunities for lifelong learning, addressing the educational needs of Americans from the moment they are born to the day they retire from the workforce. The vision is simple: Every 8-year old must be able to read, every 12-year old must be able to log onto the Internet, every 18-year old must be able to go to college, and all adults must be able to keep on learning.

The specific proposals are just plain common sense: Our children deserve talented and dedicated teachers and administrators who will help them meet national standards of achievement. They deserve safe and spacious schools, places where their primary challenge is not to stay dry in hallways plagued by leaky ceilings or to ignore the hard-sell of a drug dealer, but to understand an algebra problem or create a website on the Internet. Our neediest children deserve the benefits of early childhood education programs such as Head Start, proven programs that ensure they arrive in our schools ready and eager to learn. And our parents deserve the opportunity to choose the public schools that best suit their child's needs.

For the past two centuries, as our democracy has grown and matured, as we have recognized the transforming effects of higher education not only in the lives of individuals, but in the vitality of our economy and society, we have helped more and more Americans attend college. We've built great public universities and community colleges in every state of Union, passed the G.I. Bill that enlarged the pool of college graduates in our country by unprecedented numbers, created federal student loans and Pell Grants that to this day make college tuition much more affordable.

As a result, America enjoys the best, most accessible system of higher education on Earth. Over the years, I've met parents who have sacrificed comfortable lives in their native countries to take minimum wage jobs as dishwashers or waiters because they knew that their children would have more opportunities for higher education in America.

These are wonderful reasons to take pride in our system of higher education. But let us also recognize that we must throw open the doors of learning even wider. Too many families across our country are worried that despite their best efforts to save for the future, rising tuition costs will keep their children from college or else saddle them with mounds of insurmountable

debt. At the same time, we are living in a time when a higher education is no longer just a luxury. It is a necessity. Today, a typical worker with a college degree makes 73 percent more than a worker with a high school diploma. Two years of college mean a 20 percent increase in earnings.

That is why it is time to make the 13th and 14th years of education as universal as the first twelve. I've called upon Congress to support America's HOPE scholarships, a \$1,500 tuition tax credit which would be enough to pay for a year's education at community colleges such as Midwestern or take a bite out of tuition fees at a four-year institution. To give families even more flexibility and opportunity, I'm also asking Congress to support a \$10,000 tax deduction for tuition after high school, tax-free IRAs for college tuition, and an increase in Pell Grants to help our neediest students fulfill dreams of higher education. And for workers who have been laid off or who want to upgrade their skills, I'm proposing that we consolidate various federal job training programs into a single training grant for tuition at vocational school or community college.

Strengthening our schools, expanding access to college, honoring the principle of lifelong learning -- these are some of the ways we can make sure that America remains the Land of Opportunity in the new millennium. These are some of the ways we can make sure that every one of us has the tools to make a living in the 21st century.

But let's remember always that education doesn't just teach us how to make a living. It teaches us how to live, to value the diversity of our people and to honor our democracy. Henry Adams once said, "From cradle to grave this problem of running order through chaos, directions through space, discipline through freedom; unity through multiplicity has always been, and must always be, the task of education."

Here at Midwestern, men and women from all walks and stages of life come, ostensibly, to absorb knowledge from teachers and textbooks. But you have learned much more from each other, discovering joy and unity in your multiplicity of backgrounds, ages and life experiences. You have learned to appreciate each other not as types, but as fellow Americans, as fellow human beings. You have discovered that being American doesn't lie in the color of your skin, the holidays you celebrate, or the food you eat, but in your shared belief in the American Dream and in your willingness to work for it. And I know that if we all work together, we can make that American Dream come true for each and everyone of us.

Thank you and God Bless America.

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Remarks By the President To
Olney Central Community College

Thank-you. Thank-you very much. Thank-you Senator Mosely-Braun, Congressman Poshard, President Burke, Dick and Joanne Fessel, Dr. Murray [and other acknowledgees]. A special word of thanks to Patty Hill, the chairman of the Richland County School Board and a word of welcome to members of the Coalition for Progress.

It is a pleasure to be here in Olney today. Olney is a town that reminds me a great deal of Hope, Arkansas, a farming town founded on hard work and strong values where people look after their neighbors.

Earlier today, I saw some of Olney's famous white squirrels. Someone on my staff said we ought to bring some white squirrels back to the White House. But, Congressman Poshard said they might not survive in Washington which can be tough even on squirrels, so I guess we'll have to leave them here.

But there is something about the values and community of a small town like Olney that ought to teach us about how to live and act as a nation. You've learned that how we help one another, determines the opportunity we create for ourselves.

Today, I want to talk to you about a tremendous opportunity that we in America have as we prepare to enter the Twenty-first Century. We have a moment of peace and prosperity that gives us an extraordinary opportunity to decide what kind of future we want for America.

For the first time in a half a century, we no longer face an enemy. But as I said in my State of the Union address earlier this year, we still have an enemy, the enemy of inaction.

Usually when people feel secure and relatively prosperous, we either get happy and self satisfied and don't do anything or because we do not face big problems, we fall out with one another over small ones.

But given the stakes we face, we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be divided among ourselves. For we have an opportunity to fashion a future unlike any we have ever seen.

If you look at where we are today, you can catch a glimpse of the 21st Century. Our economy has produced over 12 million jobs in four years--something that has never happened before. We've had five straight years of falling crime. We've seen the biggest drop in the welfare rolls in American history over the last four years. Here in Illinois, unemployment has dropped to 4.8%. That's going on all over America. But there's more that we must do.

Between 1992 and the year 2000, 89% of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than a high school level of literacy and math skills. You know that in Olney where Huffy Bicycles is working with Olney Central to train people for its new distribution center. Skills are the key to participating in the new economy.

You may remember at the end of the 1980s that people worried about the decline of the middle class. Well in the last few years, inequality has started to come down. We can begin to grow the middle class again but we have to provide people with the skills to hold new jobs.

That is why our number one priority is to make America's education the best in the world.

If you go back through our history, education and opportunity have always gone hand and hand in America. Think of universal education in the 19th Century which gave America a leg up on the countries of Europe. Think of the land grant schools championed by Congressman Justin Morrill which endowed the University of Illinois up in Urbana with its program of agricultural extension and made American agriculture first in the world.

But Olney illustrates how our economy is changing. Not long ago, wealth came primarily from the ground--in the form of food and oil. [Olney has oil wells scattered over farmland]. Today, crops and oil are still important but more and more wealth comes from knowledge--from trading commodity futures as people are doing in West Liberty to building telephone switches as Ameritech is doing in Lawrenceville.

And a new economy demands new skills.

Thanks to computers, we have great new ways to educate our young. The Internet offers ways to learn long distance and tap into libraries around the world. Yet despite all this new technology, too many of our children still can't read.

That is why we have to build a nation where every 8-year old can read, every 12-year old can log onto the Internet and every adult can keep on learning for his or her entire lifetime.

In my State of the Union address, I laid out a ten point call to action for American education that describes the steps we have to take. Let me go over some of them.

First, we have to make sure that all of our children come to school ready to learn. Our balanced budget will expand Head Start to a million children.

We must also build new classrooms. Last week, I visited a classroom in Los Angeles where half the building was condemned. This year more children entered school than ever before. We have to create schools to educate them.

We must also put every classroom and library on Internet by 2000. Patty Hill told me that the Coalition for Progress has hooked up all of Richland County's schools to the Internet. Around the country, we're working with private industry to accomplish this goal.

We also have to open the doors of college to all. It used to be that a high school diploma was all you needed but that's no longer true. Now we have to make the 13th and 14th years of education just as universal by year 2000 as high school is today.

Through our Americorps program of national service we've created 200,000 slots for workstudy and opened 70,000 slots for college.

In addition, I've proposed reform of IRAs to enable withdrawals for higher education that combined with our proposed \$10,000 tuition credit can cut the cost of an education by 40%. And our proposed Hope scholarship provides a \$1,500 tax credit for higher education.

Changes like you've seen in Olney mean that people need to keep learning their entire lives. That's why I've proposed a GI Bill of Rights for America's Workers that takes the 70 training programs we have and combines them to give anyone who loses their job a skills grant that they can use right at their local community college such as Olney Central.

We've proposed national standards to find out how students are doing. Now some people oppose standards as some kind of power grab by the federal government. We're not proposing federal standards, just national ones. And we're proposing them for two things that should not be controversial: math and education. We also need to certify teachers.

In conclusion, as I said at the beginning of my speech, with the end of the Cold War, we have a tremendous opportunity. Our only obstacle is whether we can work together.

During the Cold War, because our future was at stake, we had a bipartisan foreign policy. Politics stopped at the water's edge. Now, we need a nonpartisan commitment to education and politics. Let's agree that politics should stop at the schoolhouse door.

Together, let's work to continue to improve education for our children. As we prepare for the 21st Century, there is no higher priority.

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SPEECH 1 – VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The Assault Weapons Ban that law enforcement officers hoped would give them a measure of protection against being out-gunned was repealed by some lawmakers more attuned to the needs of narrow-minded special interests. Well, when it comes to public safety, I stand with these men and women in blue -- I am more concerned with the well-being of the officers who have to stare down the barrel, or clean up the wake, of an assault weapon than some folks who think emptying a clip in a few seconds amounts to sport.

Last month, America saw what these frontline officers encounter far too often, when two would-be bank robbers cut a swath of destruction through a Los Angeles neighborhood. Even from the safety of our living rooms, America shuddered as two gunmen used an array of assault weapons to hold off police, then simply slipped in a new clip and resumed sweeping the streets in a hail of mayhem. That no police or civilians were killed was providence. That the police needed the help of a nearby gun shop owner to stand a fighting chance was terrifying.

The scene in Los Angeles was caught on camera, and the true destructive capacity of assault weapons was made perfectly clear. But out of the camera's eye, officers face down assault weapons every day, and too often are not as fortunate as those in Los Angeles. Susan Jones's husband Bill was an officer killed in the line of duty by a gang member sticking up a 7-11 store with an assault weapon. Facing a gun that shot some 30 rounds without a pause, he literally never had a chance.

Assault weapons exist for one reason -- to outgun law enforcement and to do as much damage as possible. That is why I am vetoing this ill-thought repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban -- to give police officers, sheriffs, state troopers, and every man and woman who puts their life on the line to protect us a fighting chance. I refuse to accept any argument that assault weapons are for sport; and the people pushing that line are the same ones who fought the ban on teflon-tipped bullets -- "cop killer" bullets intended to pierce bullet proof vests -- and wanted

plastic handguns that wouldn't show up on airport x-ray machines to be OKed for sale.

I'm sorry, but banning assault weapons is not an attack on sportsmen or hunters or homeowners. It is an attempt to give cops any and every advantage, and to start making it tougher for gangs, drug dealers, and would-be killers to get their hands on guns that are made to cut down anyone and anything in their way, as indiscriminately as possible.

I know the headlines still horrify us with vicious crimes and the brazenness of criminals. But the truth is, America is a safer place today, period. Serious crime has declined for five straight years. We've put more officers in the beat, barred felons from buying guns and kept handguns out of reach of anyone convicted of domestic violence, and we've toughened drug sentencing laws. These are the steps that turn the tide on crime -- and now is the time to turn that tide into an onslaught, and continue making every street, neighborhood, and community a safe place for families, for seniors, for businesses, and for every day life.

This veto is in the hope that the officers with us today do not have to gather in their dress blues at the funeral of a fellow officer outgunned by an assault weapon. My wish is that leaders in Congress come to see the Assault Weapons Ban from the same perspective. Thank you.

No president takes his power to veto legislation lightly. But at times that executive decision has to be made to protect the values we have set for ourselves as a nation. It is in that spirit that I come before you today, joined by these fine men and women who represent America's law enforcement community, to make right what is clearly wrong.

Four years ago, when I first took the oath of office as president, many Americans believed crime and violence had taken a strangle hold on their neighborhoods. People abandoned the streets to criminals. They sat inside their homes, only venturing out when absolutely necessary, and at those times were in constant fear of a senseless attack.

We began correcting that intolerable situation by putting together a comprehensive plan to fight crime that includes hiring and training 100,000 new community police officers, developing innovative programs to keep young people out of gangs and away from drugs, and supporting landmark legislation such as the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

Our strategies are working. Serious crime statistics have gone down each of the last five years. That's the longest decline in more than 25 years. Murders, rapes, robberies -- all down. Even the violent crime rate among young people is finally beginning to recede.

But despite the overwhelming evidence that this approach has been successful, there have been misguided attempts to scuttle portions of our crime-fighting strategy even as we try to have other needed elements added to it.

Congress has been convinced that it should repeal the assault weapons ban. But we standing before you today cannot allow that to happen. We cannot forget that Officer Bill Jones, whose widow Susan stands with us today, was shot to death by a gang member who used one of the very assault weapons this legislation seeks to ban.

We remember the San Francisco gunman who used two TEK-9s to kill eight people. We remember the five elementary school children who were murdered by a gunman who used an Ak-47. We cannot help but think of other officers who, like Bill Jones, will die in the line of duty if the assault weapons ban isn't kept intact.

The arguments of those who oppose the assault weapons ban are specious. You all remember how they claimed this legislation would allow the government to take away hunters' rifles. As someone who fired his first gun when he was 12 years old, I never would have supported anything that infringed on the rights of America's sportsmen and women.

And that has not happened. The assault weapons ban protected more than 650 hunting weapons. Its detractors should have applauded the first explicit protection of hunting by the federal government. But in their myopia, they could not see the truth.

Not a single hunter has been denied a weapon. Instead, the Brady Bill has thwarted more than 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers who tried to get their hands on a gun. We need to do more to reduce the ability of criminals to get guns. It's not time to retreat.

The men and women here with me today are the police officers and law enforcement agents who put their lives on the line to protect us. It is dangerous work. Too often, it is thankless as well.

We ask the police to keep us safe. We ought to do whatever we can to help keep them safe while they do their job. These police officers are asking their government to outlaw weapons that serve no function other than to maim or destroy human life. I'm vetoing the repeal of the assault weapons ban because that's not too much to ask.

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

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Four years ago, we started fighting crime in America with tough, new ideas. We gave our communities, our families and our police the tools they needed to create safe streets in safe neighborhoods.

We began putting 100,000 new community police officers on the street. We made "three strikes and you're out" the law of the land. We denied handguns to 60,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers under the Brady Bill. We expanded the death penalty.

And we banned 19 deadly assault rifles.

We have made unprecedented progress in our quest for communities controlling our streets, not the streets controlling our communities.

The crime rate has gone down five years in a row. Murders, rapes and robberies are down.

Now, as we continue to prepare our children and our nation for the century ahead, we must build on this record of taking criminals, drugs and guns off our streets. We must build on this monument to civility, not tear it down.

Today I am vetoing a bill that would repeal the ban on assault weapons. But more than that, it would repeal the progress we've made in fighting crime and violence.

I veto this bill with a pen and the determination that no child will again stare down the barrel of an AK-47, no man will again lose his wife to a TEK-9, no police officer will again die in the line of duty because we didn't have the courage to stand for what's right.

I veto this bill in the name of Officer Bill Jones. Killed by a gang member wielding an assault weapon. Officer Jones spent his life protecting our children and defending our streets. The strength and courage and spirit that were Officer Jones will live on if we remain responsible for the safety of our schools, our families and our neighborhoods.

Today we are honored with the presence of Officer Jones' wife, Susan. After I use this pen in the hope of saving lives, I would like to give it to you, Susan, in memory of the man who gave his life.

We are also honored to be joined by men and women who represent law enforcement in America today. You don't read about them in the papers. They patrol the communities where citizens walk the streets by day and sleep peacefully at night. They don't always get the recognition they deserve, but they earn our gratitude every day.

There are those who don't want me to veto this bill. They say that banning assault weapons is the first step in banning all guns. I challenge those critics to look at the facts. We banned the rifles that have no other purpose - none - than to cause injury in the hands of crazed gunmen.

And this is not about hunting. I have worked hard to protect the rights of sports groups, and many sportsmen and women support the ban.

We should not let the extreme views of some drown out the sensible strategy we crafted with one shining voice. We can preserve our sport and protect our children.

Today I veto this bill to keep us on our tough new track of fighting crime and drugs and guns - to keep us moving forward with a clear vision of safe streets and safe schools and a clear conscience of doing what is right for our children and for our future.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT IN VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

Three years ago, Congress passed and I signed a tough and smart Crime Bill that took a number of important steps toward making our streets, schools and homes safer. Part of that Crime Bill was a ban on 19 deadly assault weapons that had become the tools of criminals and terrorists.

Yesterday, Congress took an enormous step backward in the war on crime, by repealing the Assault Weapons Ban. They were wrong to do it, and I have vowed to stop it. Today, I am reversing a serious congressional mistake by vetoing Congress' repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban.

Those in Congress who favored the repeal of the ban took up that tired old line about how banning these combat-style weapons infringed on the rights of sportsman to own and use guns. That's just wrong -- the Assault Weapons Ban explicitly protects 650 specific types of hunting and sporting weapons.

Invoking the rights of sportsmen is a transparent smokescreen. I started hunting when I was twelve years old, and no one can show me any use for an AK-47 in the woods. The 19 assault weapons banned under the Crime Bill are not used for hunting quail or deer -- they're used for hunting people.

Joining me today are a group of brave men and women who face the threat of heavily armed hunters on the street. Our police officers on the front lines of the war on crime know just how deadly assault weapons can be in the hands of a gang member, a crack addict or a deranged killer. They see first hand the dangers that these weapons pose to our families, our children and those sworn to protect us.

Also with me today is a woman who, along with her family, has paid a horrible price for the easy availability of assault weapons. Susan Jones is the widow of Officer Bill Jones, a police officer in Cleveland. Officer Jones was in uniform and on duty one night when he responded to a call of a robbery at a local convenience store. A gang member armed with an AK-47 assault weapon gunned down Bill Jones, and now Susan is raising their two beautiful children by herself.

The 1994 Crime Bill went a long way toward shutting down the supply of these guns and keeping them out of the hands of criminals like the one that killed Bill Jones. The Assault Weapons Ban, along with the Brady Bill, funding for 100,000 new community police officers, and tough new penalties for crime and drugs made up our comprehensive plan to fight crime.

That plan is working. Serious crime has dropped for five years in a row, which is the longest decline in 25 years. With crime on the run, the last thing that we should do is turn the pressure down and help put deadly weapons back into the hands of criminals.

Yet with its repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban, Congress has passed a bill that would do just that, reversing some of the progress we have made by resuming the flow of assault weapons onto the streets of America.

The Assault Weapons Ban is important and effective, and it infringes no one's constitutional rights. I will not allow a wrong-headed campaign orchestrated by special interests to make our communities more dangerous. Those protected by the Assault Weapons Ban -- our families and our law enforcement officers -- need and want us to keep the ban in place. With this veto, that is what I will do.



Short Statement for Veto of Repeal of Assault Weapons Ban
WORD COUNT: 591

Thank you. And thank you very much to the police officers and law enforcement representatives who have joined me today to show their support for the Assault Weapons Ban. You risk your lives everyday to make our neighborhoods safe, and we need to make sure that you're not outgunned on our streets.

I especially want to thank Susan Jones for joining us. Susan is the widow of Officer Bill Jones, a policeman who was killed by a gang member with an assault weapon during a 7-11 hold up. Undeniably, Bill Jones is a hero, and that reminds me of the words of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy."

Bill's death was an individual tragedy, but I'm here today to prevent a national tragedy--the repeal of the ban on assault weapons. Recently, Congress took the side of the gun lobby; they put a special interest above the public interest. But repealing the Assault Weapons Ban is unwise, unnecessary--and deadly.

It's unwise to repeal the ban because it's working. Before the ban, the number of assault weapons involved in crimes was rising steadily. But in just the first year since the ban took effect, the number of assault weapons traced to crimes has dropped by 18%. And every gun removed from the streets may mean one more police officer who returns home at the end of the shift, or one more child who gets to celebrate another birthday.

It's also unnecessary to repeal the ban because the only people who need assault weapons are criminals, drug dealers and thugs. These are weapons of war, designed for only one reason, close-quarter, rapid-fire killing. Honest citizens don't need these. Honest business people don't. And honest hunters don't. I know, I'm a hunter. As I've mentioned before, I was probably 12 years old when I fired my first .22 or .410, and I fondly remember bagging my first quail. And let me tell you, I'd hate to see the looks of any tiny quail that was shot out of the sky with an AK-47 assault rifle.

The Assault Weapons Ban actually protects 650 specific hunting and recreational guns. No law abiding hunter, or citizen, will have his or her gun taken away. This isn't about eliminating guns; it's about eliminating gun violence.

Finally, repealing the Assault Weapons Ban is just plain deadly. You see, Officer Jones wasn't only a victim of a gang member. No, he was also the victim of the gun violence epidemic. Despite the fact that we've seen serious crime drop for the fourth year in row, this epidemic still kills and wounds thousands of Americans each year. And none of us are immune to this particular disease. So as long as assault weapons remain on the street, all of us remain their potential victims.

I'm vetoing the repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban because I want to protect all the officers of the "thin blue line" who risk their lives for us. And because I want to protect our children and grandmothers who happen to wander into a 7-11 at the wrong moment. And

because I want to protect every American from the fear that they will become the next victim of a criminal with an assault weapon. We need no more heroes like Bill Jones.

You know, it's been said that death is the ultimate tragedy. But a far greater tragedy would be to allow the repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban, and so let our streets turn into killing fields.

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REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
IN VETOING THE REPEAL OF THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

To the law enforcement officials, thank you for joining us. I know many of you traveled great distances from your States and communities, and you represent them proudly with your work.

To the police officers, thank you, too, for joining us. And thank you for the work you do every day to protect our parents, our children, and our neighbors; you honor us with your presence today.

Susan Jones, thank you for being here. On an occasion like this, we think about the debt that we owe to your late husband, Officer Bill Jones, for his hard work in protecting the people of your community. It is with him in mind that we continue our efforts to ensure that criminals are not better armed than our police.

When my Administration took office, we pledged to stop talking about crime and start doing something about it. We knew if we worked together, we could reverse the hopelessness that too many Americans were feeling about the surge of crime that was keeping them locked in their homes.

Working with Congress, we put a comprehensive plan in place. We enacted my program to put 100,000 more police on the street. We made "three strikes and you're out" the law of the land, expanded the death penalty, and beefed up other penalties against crime. We passed the Brady Bill to provide for background checks of those who want to buy handguns. And we banned 19 deadly assault weapons -- without, without infringing on the legitimate rights of hunters.

Our work is paying off. We have now reduced violent and serious crime for five years in a row. That's the longest such drop in 25 years. Murders are down, rapes are down, armed robberies are down, and drug use is down. We have kept handguns away from over 100,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers, many of whom surely would have used those guns to commit new crimes.

Of course, our work is not done. We must not rest until crime becomes a shocking exception to our lives. In particular, we must focus on juvenile crime by strengthening our laws and providing more resources -- while we steer our young people away from gangs and give them something to say yes to.

But now, just when we've begun to win the fight, the Republican majority in Congress wants to turn back the clock. With the gun lobby at their side, they want to return to the days when criminals had more firepower than our police. [Yesterday], they sent me a bill to repeal the assault weapon ban.

My friends, I have repeatedly made it clear that I would not allow that to happen. And I will not today.

Members of Congress voted for the assault weapons ban at great political risk. With the gun lobby working against them, many of them lost their seats in the next election. But they were right to enact the ban, and Congress is wrong to try to repeal it now.

Police officers do not face such political risks. Each day, they face much more serious personal risks. Each day, they put their lives on the line to protect you and me. We have lost too many good police officers like Bill Jones. And I will do everything I can to see that we do not lose more.

With this pen -- the same pen I used to sign the assault weapons ban three years ago -- I am vetoing this bill. And I will veto any future effort to repeal the ban. On this issue, I will not budge.

Thank you, and God bless you.

REMARKS FOR VETO OF REPEAL OF ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

Good Morning. There are many difficult decisions that confront a president every day, decisions that can keep me up nights agonizing over what is best for America. The decision to veto this bill and, in doing so, preserve the assault weapons ban was not one of them.

Just spend a few minutes with Susan Jones, whose husband Bill, a 10-year police veteran, was killed by a gang member with an AK-47 during a convenience store hold-up; or talk to any one of the brave law enforcement officers standing behind me who put their lives on the line every day to protect us from harm; or look into the eyes of a young child who walks to school each day fearing that an assault rifle could make that day her last, and the answer becomes very clear.

This repeal is a step backward. It is a step that will undermine the efforts we began four years ago to free our children and families from the grip of crime and senseless violence. It is a step I can not in good conscience take on behalf of the American people.

This repeal would knock out a cornerstone of the comprehensive plan we passed in 1994 to reclaim our neighborhoods from criminals, a plan that has led to the fifth straight decline in our annual crime rate. Our plan has put 100,000 new community police officers on the streets -- 100,000 dedicated officers who have worked closely with the people they serve to catch criminals, to shut down crack houses, and to prevent crime from happening in the first place.

But our plan has also recognized that our police alone can not bring peace, hope and order to our communities. They need stronger laws to back them up. That's why we put tough new penalties on the books to keep dangerous or repeat offenders in jail for longer sentences. And no police officer can match the lethal barrage of an assault rifle. Each AK-47 that is allowed onto our streets traps too many of our fellow Americans in communities polluted by fear. Each one robs all of us of the freedom to raise our children in peace and safety. That's why we took 19 kinds of assault weapons off our streets and passed the Brady Bill to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

The right to bear arms has been a vital part of our constitution for centuries. And throughout my twenty-years in public service, I have done everything in my power to defend the second amendment. But I believe with all my heart that the assault weapons ban does not infringe on this right. In the two years since the assault weapons ban became the law of the land, no hunter has had to miss a single hunting season, no law-abiding citizen has been stopped from buying a gun to defend his or her family.

But, because of this law, Americans like Susan Jones, our law enforcement officers, and families all across our country have gained greater peace of mind and the opportunity to live in safer neighborhoods, to walk along safer streets and to pursue their dreams in safer communities. I refuse to jeopardize this progress. I refuse to jeopardize our children's lives and their futures. And I have no choice but to veto this bill.

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Statement of the President Upon Vetoing Repeal of the Assault Weapons Ban

Thank-you. Thank-you, Attorney General Reno, Secretary Rubin, Secretary Shalala, General McCaffrey, FBI Director Freeh, Undersecretary Kelly [police chiefs and other acknowledgees]. Let me extend a special welcome to Susan Jones, the wife of police officer Bill Jones who was tragically killed in the line of duty, and their children Stephanie and Bill, Jr. who are with us here today.

Throughout history, American Presidents have used the power of the veto to protect the values that bind us together.

As President, one of my most important goals has been to strengthen those values so that we may better pursue our rights under the Constitution to life, liberty and the pursuit of the American Dream.

Four years ago, when I took office, we faced a terrible plague of violence. The appearance of a new weapon on our streets, the assault weapon, placed our police at a new level of risk. Despite an overwhelming consensus among law enforcement officers that these deadly guns posed an unprecedented threat to our community, the gun lobby and its allies in Congress managed to block any efforts to restrict their sale.

I pledged to work with the law enforcement community and with citizens personally touched by tragedy such as Susan Jones who lost her husband, Bill to a gang member armed with an AKA-47 during a hold up of a 7-11 and Sarah Brady, the wife of President Reagan's press secretary, Jim Brady to ban these deadly weapons.

Three years ago, thanks to their hard work, we passed the Brady Bill which subjects purchasers of handguns to a simple background check and bans assault weapons.

Since then, three deer hunting seasons, three duck hunting seasons and three bear hunting seasons have all passed and not one sportsman has been denied the ability to hunt.

But 60,000 convicted felons, drug dealers, fugitives, and stalkers have been denied guns. And 3,000 fewer people died last year from gun violence.

Passing that bill was the right thing to do.

But last week Congress, backed by the gun lobby, voted to repeal the assault weapons ban. Despite the pleas of the widows and survivors of those gunned down, despite the success of the ban in cutting crime and despite the unanimous opposition of the law enforcement community, Congress has voted to permit criminals, fugitives and others to buy assault weapons over the counter.

Over the last four years, we have made great progress in cutting crime. We made three strikes and you're out, the law of the land. We told drug dealers who prey on public housing: one criminal conviction and you're out. We told sexual predators: the law will follow you wherever you go. We are on track to put 100,000 more police officers on the street. And we banned assault weapons outright.

Our plan is working. Today, there are one million fewer crime victims today than four years ago. We are looking to build a nation in the 21st Century where people feel safe when they go out at night, untroubled when their children go off to school and where no one's grandmother lives across the street from a crackhouse. With crime down five years in a row, this is no time to retreat.

Earlier this year, I sent Congress a message: that I would veto any bill to repeal the assault weapons ban.

And so with this pen which Dwight Eisenhower used to sign legislation to expand the FBI, I veto this bill because it would result in more deaths and more orphans, it would result in more fear in our community and it would result in more danger for our brave men and women in law enforcement.