

Public Papers of the Presidents

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April 4, 2000

POTUS
on
Unions**CITE:** 36 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 717**LENGTH:** 3112 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks to the **AFL -- CIO** Building and Construction Trades Department Conference**BODY:**

Thank you. Well, the first thing I would like to say is John Podesta told me that he emceed this retirement dinner for Bob Sunday night. And then Hillary came over here for breakfast, and I just kind of got lonesome. Nobody had me come over, so I just thought I would intrude myself on your meeting. And I'm glad to be here.

I want to say I came for two reasons. First of all, I came to thank you for all the support you've given me and for all the work you've done for America and for all the people you represent. I have tried, too, to be a builder, and the builders of this country, to me, embody the best of America. So I want to thank you, because without your help and your support, none of the good things that have happened that our administration, that the Vice President and I have been part of, would have been possible.

And the second thing I wanted to do was to say a special word of thanks to Bob Georgine as he retires after 29 years. Thank you for your leadership on raising the minimum wage, on school construction, on bringing investment to the new markets of America that have been left out of our prosperity, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, and on all the issues that specifically affect your members and working people.

And I wanted to also thank you for last Labor Day, where you taught me to use an electric screwdriver. *[Laughter]* Now that I'm moving into my own home and it's 111 years old, I might need that skill again, before you know it. *[Laughter]*

Bob and I are both retiring. And at least he's doing it voluntarily. I'm term-limited. But I tell you, as we look back on the last 7 years, it has been a wonderful experience. And again I say, we could not have done it without you. What I'd like for you to do now is just take a few minutes with me and think about why we are where we are and where we need to go.

I have my politics, I suppose, partly from the way I was raised by my grandparents and my family, partly from what I've learned as a Governor in my home State of Arkansas and as President, partly from what I've observed about human affairs and human nature. But I have come to believe that there are basically two big approaches here to American politics: One is, obviously, from the bottom up; the other is from the top down. We're on the bottom-up side. The other is unite and lift against divide and conquer. I think that most of us believe the way we do because we think everyone counts, everyone ought to have a chance, everyone has a role to play in our society, and we all do better when we help each other. That's why we think everyone should have opportunity, and we should have a community of all Americans.

Now, if you think about where we are today, it seems to me that even though I love to hear you cheer for me and for where we are and what we've done, the real issue is, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? You know, people can be tested in adversity, but they are also tested when times are good. When you build up a great legacy, what do you do with it? And I've worked as hard as I could for the last 7 years to try to first turn this country around. Just remember what it was like when we all -- when Al Gore and I showed up here. We had high deficits. We had high interest rates. We had no job growth. We had social divisions. We had

political gridlock. I've worked hard to try to turn it around. The country is moving in the right direction. What are we going to do with it? And that is the real issue.

And I would argue that you have a solemn responsibility in this election season not only to mobilize your members and their families but to reach out to the larger American community to say, "This is not a time for self-indulgence. This is a time to concentrate on our unique ability to meet the big, long-term challenges of America, for the most vulnerable among us, for the children like those children that are in this audience today." And I'd just like to begin with one -- Bob alluded to it.

In the next 30 years, all the baby boomers are going to retire, and we'll only have about two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. Not two people total, but -- *[laughter]* -- two people. Even I couldn't get that done. *[Laughter]* Two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And so there will be a great question here. How are we going to change that? How are we going to accommodate the aging of America?

Well, I'm about to sign a bill which removes the Social Security earnings limit, so people who want to work in their later years can do so and still draw their Social Security. I think that's good thing to do. But we also have to recognize that we're going to have to make some changes in order for Social Security to mean, in the 21st century, what it has meant to the 20th century.

We're also going to have to make some changes in the Medicare program, which was established when President Johnson was here, to make it work in the 21st century. And I've asked the Congress, for example, to dedicate the interest savings from paying down the debt to the Social Security Trust Fund. Why? Because right now, we're paying more in Social Security taxes than we're paying out in Social Security. So as we pay the debt down, I want to take the interest savings from paying the debt down, put it in the Trust Fund. It would now allow us to add about 54 years to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund and take it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation.

And I hope you'll talk to the Members of Congress. I know a lot of Republicans have supported many of your issues, and you have relationships with both Republicans and Democrats. This is not a complicated deal. The only reason for the Republicans not to support this is if they want to privatize Social Security, if they can get the Congress and the White House. Now, you need to put the heat on folks to say, "We've got the money now. Let's dedicate it now to saving Social Security and taking it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation."

The other thing we have to do is to modernize Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit for our seniors on Medicare. Now, we just learned last week that Medicare, which was scheduled to go broke in 1999, last year. When I took office, they said the Trust Fund would run out of money in 1999. We have now taken it out to 2023, and I'm very proud of that. But, you know, if we were designing a Medicare program today, no one would even think about designing Medicare without prescription drug coverage.

First of all, because there's been so many dramatic advances in medication. And secondly, because, again I will say, the nature of people over 65 has changed. When Medicare was originally designed, people didn't live much longer than 65 years, typically, and this was designed for emergency care or for critical care, for hospitals and doctors. Now, any American lives to be 65 has got a life expectancy of 83.

And more and more, we need preventive care and chronic care. And more and more, that is prescription medication. No one -- if we were starting all over again today, we we'd never even think about having a Medicare program that didn't provide a prescription drug component.

Now, I've just come from a meeting with the Senate Democrats, and the Senate is taking up the budget today, and the Democrats are going to try to, first of all, say we should not spend the surplus on risky tax cuts; we should first take care of our basic business. Senator Robb is going to

offer an amendment today, supported by Senator Daschle, that makes this simple statement: After we modernize Medicare with an affordable, broadbased, voluntary prescription drug benefit, then we can move forward with sensible tax cuts that aren't so big they undermine our ability to save Social Security, pay down the debt, and invest in the education of our children. But first things first.

So the Senate is going to get a resolution by Senator Robb today that says, say yes to Medicare and prescription drugs and no to having a big tax cut first. So I hope you will support that.

Now, interestingly enough, a number of people in the Republican majority are saying, "Okay, well, I'll go along with the drug program as long as everybody doesn't get it. We ought to stop at the poverty level or 150 percent of the poverty level or maybe at the outer reaches, some of them 200 percent of the poverty level." Let me tell you something. They want to say that nobody with an annual income of over \$ 16,700 should get help with this prescription drug benefit. I just think that's wrong.

If you think about it, a lot of you have parents, uncles, aunts -- maybe your older brothers and sisters, that are on Medicare. If they have a \$ 300 or \$ 400 a month drug bill, which is not all that rare, then \$ 16,000 is not all that much money. And since this benefit is voluntary -- again I will say, I don't think a widow earning \$ 16,000 or even \$ 20,000 a year is less deserving of drug coverage than someone who is below the poverty line.

So I hope you will stick up for the proposition that all of our seniors should have the option of buying into this insurance program. That's what made Medicare work in the first place. That's what made Social Security work in the first place. It was a universal program that helped middle class people as well as low income people. And this is an opportunity to improve the process of aging in America in a way that is humane and decent and completely affordable. So we need your help to get prescription drug coverage in the Medicare program this year, in the right way, for all Americans.

I also want to thank you for your devotion to the welfare of people on the other end of life's age line, for your support for education and, in particular, for the work you have done to build bipartisan support for school construction and renovation.

This year I have sent a budget to the Congress which will enable us to build or modernize 6,000 schools and to repair 5,000 schools a year over the next 5 years. This is terrifically important. We've got the largest school population we've ever had. We want to have high standards and high accountability. We want to hook all these schools up to the Internet.

But there are schools in New York City that are still being heated with coal -- with coal. The average age of a school building in Philadelphia is 65 years. I was in a small town in Florida, visiting an elementary school where there were 12 -- 12 -- house trailers behind the school to take the overflow of the students. One-third of our schools are in serious disrepair; a lot of them literally too old to be wired for the Internet. Other kids in trailers that need to be in modern classrooms.

This is a big issue. We've been working on it for 3 years now. This week the Department of Education released a State-by-State report, telling us that the need has grown and grown. Enrollment is growing; facilities are crumbling. Every year we fail to act the problem gets worse. I am very frustrated by those who say in the majority in Congress that this is not a national responsibility. That is not true.

I'm not trying to tell people how to build the buildings. I'm not trying to prescribe the -- we're not trying to micromanage this program. But the school districts of this country do not have the money or the means right now to do what our children need. We have finally more people in the schools than we had during the baby boom generation after World War II. And we cannot expect them to learn in facilities that are unbearable and, in many cases, unwireable.

So I asked you to work with me. With your help, we actually have now a strong bipartisan school construction bill in the House. And thanks to you, largely, we have both Republicans as well as Democrats supporting this legislation in the Senate and the House. The House bill would allocate \$ 24.8 billion to help communities build or renovate these 6,000 schools.

So now that you've gotten us some good Republican support, we have to get this to a vote. Once it became obvious on the House floor that we actually had Republicans supporting this bill and that we could pass it, then efforts were made to keep it from coming to a vote. So I say to you, there are a lot of people who believe that this year, because it's election year, should be a year where nothing gets done. And I have challenged every Member of Congress who believes that to relinquish his or her salary for a year, because we didn't get to where we are today by taking a year off. You don't get to take a year off. Nobody else gets to take a year off, and everybody's drawing a paycheck every 2 weeks. There is no reason not to continue to move forward.

Believe me, no matter how much progress we make this year, there will still be significant areas of disagreement between our Presidential candidates and between the two parties in all the congressional races. So let's show up for the American people and do what we can. There is no reason -- no reason -- not to pass the prescription drug benefit on Medicare and not to pass the school construction bill this year. And you can help us do it. I hope you will.

Now, I would like to close with the point with which I began, first, with a simple thank you and, second, with a reminder that this year, this election year, imposes on all of us an historic responsibility. We did not get to where we are today, with 21 million new jobs and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever measured, highest home-ownership in history, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, lowest poverty rates in 20 years, lowest crime rates in 25 years -- this didn't happen by accident. It happened because we worked together, and we had the right ideas, and we were moving in the right direction. It happened because we believed in uniting our people and lifting them up and not in divide and conquer. It happened because we believed you could be pro-business and pro-labor, pro-work and pro-family, you could grow the economy and improve the environment, you could balance the budget and run a surplus and still invest more in education and give tax relief to middle income families.

A study last week said that the percentage of Federal income tax coming out of average families' incomes was the lowest in 40 years. That's why we had a unite and lift, not a divide and conquer theory, and because we kept working. And the only concern I have about this election year is that people will say, "Well, we've got the first surpluses we've had in 40 years, back to back. Things are going well. Why don't we vote for something that makes us feel good in the moment?"

And I just want you all to listen to this, particularly those of you that are about my age. In February we celebrated the fact that we had the longest economic expansion in American history. And so I had all my economic advisers in, and we were sitting around talking about it. And I said, "Well, when was the last longest economic expansion in history, before this one?" You know when it was? Nineteen sixty-one to 1969.

Now, let me tell you what happened then. In 1964 I graduated from high school, at the peak of this economic expansion. We had low unemployment, low inflation, high growth. Everybody thought the growth would go on forever. We had a civil rights challenge at home, but Lyndon Johnson was President. He'd united the country after President Kennedy's assassination, and people believed that the civil rights challenge would be met in the Congress and the courts, not in the streets. We were sort of involved in Vietnam, but people thought that was a long way away, and nobody dreamed it would divide the country. And people thought that we would win the cold war because our values and our system were superior, and things would just rock right along. That's what we thought in 1964.

Four years later, in this city, I graduated from college on June the 8th. It was 2 days after Robert

Kennedy had been killed, 2 months and 4 days after Martin Luther King was killed. Today is the 32d anniversary of his death. It was 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for President anymore, because the country was divided right down the middle over Vietnam and there were demonstrations everywhere.

It was a few weeks before Richard Nixon was elected President on one of those divide and conquer platforms. And I know a lot of you probably voted for him if you were of voting age -- that age. But let me just remind you of what the message was. The message was, I represent the Silent Majority, which meant that those of us that weren't for him, we were in the loud minority. So there was "us" and there was "them." And then we had all those "us" and "them" elections.

Al Gore and I came along and said, "We want to put people first. We want to unite, not divide." But just a few weeks after that election, in 1968, boom, the longest economic expansion in American history was over.

What's the point of all that? I'm not trying to get you down. I want you to be up. There's nobody more optimistic than me in this room today. But we need to have a little humility and gratitude for this moment we're in. And we need to understand that these things can get away from us. And we need to be resolved to make the most of this. This is a moment for making tomorrows, not a moment for being distracted or indulging ourselves but for making tomorrows.

We have a chance to build a future of our dreams for our children. And the reason I told you that story about the 1960's was not only to remind you that nothing lasts forever, and you have to make the most of these things, but to tell you that, not as your President but as a citizen, I have been waiting for 35 years for my country to have this chance. And you can make the most of it.

So in everything you do this year, you remember this little story I told you. And you remember that we have the chance of a lifetime that we should be grateful for. And everyone you talk to and everyone you touch and everything you say, remind people: This is our moment for making tomorrows.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Robert A. Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL -- CIO.

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February 21, 1999

CITE: 35 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 268**LENGTH:** 4933 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks at the Labor Unification Legislative Conference**BODY:**

Thank you. I would like to -- first of all, thank you for the wonderful, warm welcome -- to express my deep respect and support for the IAM president, Tom Buffenbarger, and all of the IAM officers; the UAW executive VP, Ruben Burks -- I know Steve Yokich is in Germany now -- and all the UAW members here; and the steel workers' president, George Becker, and all the steel workers here; and of course, everyone up here on the platform with me.

George Becker would give his voice, his heart, and his life for his members. And he nearly gave his voice tonight.

I came here to do a number of things, but I'd like to start with first things first. The first thing I want to do is to say a simple, profound thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your support. Thank you for the fight you have waged. Thank you for the miles we have walked together these last 6 years.

I also came here to support the merger of these three great streams of American labor, joining into a new river of 2 million strong. Throughout the 20th century, all three of you have been at the forefront in the struggle for human progress in America. The workers at River Rouge and Republic Steel shed their blood for more than their own rights and their own families. Their sacrifice gave all of us collective bargaining and the minimum wage.

The founders and members of your three **unions** gave us things all working people now take for granted as essential elements in a humane society: vacations, health care, pensions, grievance procedures. You have continued to lead the fight for all Americans -- the fight to create Medicare to civil rights, to protecting our Nation against the Contract With America. The UAW, the steel workers, the machinists have provided the minds and muscles for a progressive society in our country.

Now, in this season of renewal and rebuilding for America, the house of labor is growing stronger. The creation of a mighty new industrial **union** -- not just a merger but a new organization -- will set the stage for even greater progress for your members and your families and for all the rest of America in the 21st century.

I believe you have an opportunity and, therefore, a duty, every bit as real as that which was seized by the great generations that preceded you a half-century ago. The labor pioneers had it hard. They wore their scars proudly. They were not always the easiest of personalities. But in spite of their contentiousness, I like to think that Walter Reuther, Philip Murray, and Thomas Talbot are up in heaven shaking hands at this new merger.

I thank you all for the strong support you have given not only to me and the First Lady and the Vice President and our administration but to our Democratic Party, especially in 1998. I'll never forget the sense of pride I shared on election night with John Sweeney, when he was at the White House, and we realized that for the first time since 1822, the President's party had won seats in the House of Representatives in the sixth year of an administration. You might be interested to know that the last time that happened, in 1822, the other party disappeared. [Laughter] We won't

be that lucky. [Laughter] But it certainly is a good incentive to continue the fight.

I want to thank you for your commitment to make your voices heard, to advance the issues and the candidates that are pro-worker and pro-family. For 6 years, as George said, we've been on a journey together to renew our Nation, to restore the American dream. For decades, our Nation was buffeted by the winds of economic change. Wages for working families stagnated; working people fell further behind. Beginning in 1993, together, we put in place a new economic strategy to put our people first. Because of what you have done, America is working again -- with the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest peacetime unemployment since 1957, nearly 18 million new jobs, the lowest welfare rolls in three decades. And finally, after three decades of stagnation, in just the last 3 years wages are rising at twice the rate of inflation.

Things are not all as they ought to be, but clearly, at long last, we have begun to move aggressively in the right direction. Together, as has already been noted, we stood up against the congressional majority that was absolutely determined to strip away the victories and undermine the rights of working people.

I was proud to stand with you also to defeat the "Paycheck Protection Act" in California. I was proud to stop every piece of anti-labor legislation sent to me by the Congress. We knew the "TEAM Act" would undermine collective bargaining, so we said, no. We knew the Republican comp-time bill would be unfair to working people, so we said, no. We knew that safe pensions and a strong OSHA are vital to working people, so when Congress tried to undermine them, we said, no.

After 12 years in which my predecessors exploded deficits and quadrupled our national debt, all the while talking about a balanced budget and accusing my party and our friends in **organized labor** of being the big, irresponsible spenders, we actually balanced the budget and did it in the right way, while nearly doubling our investments in the education and training of our people, and having big increases in things like medical research.

We're in the second year of surpluses, with years and years more projected in the future. America is working again. But as I said in my State of the **Union** Address, this is not a time for complacency. For one reason, as all of you here know, especially the steel workers, we are living in a very dynamic and somewhat troubling international economic environment, where things can change over-night. For another, in a world that is changing this fast, we have to take advantage of this moment of prosperity to deal with the big challenges facing America in the 21st century. We cannot rest until America works for every American, until prosperity extends to every working family in every community. America must do more.

Among other things, we must remain a great industrial nation. So I'd like to talk to you tonight about three aspects of our challenge. First of all, before the baby boomers retire, and with life expectancy increasing at a dramatic rate, with people over 80 being the fastest growing part of our population in percentage terms, we must use this moment and this surplus to save and strengthen Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century.

Now, here in Washington there is now a great debate about what to do with the surplus and how it should be applied, and whether, to Social Security and Medicare. I won't take time tonight to talk about the competing visions of Social Security and how we should deal with that, but I will work with you on that. What I want to talk about is, what should be our first priority with the surplus? I believe it should be to save Social Security and Medicare, and in so doing -- [applause] -- and in so doing, to pay down the national debt that was quadrupled in the 12 years before I took office.

Now, I am pleased that even though we will have our disagreements about what to do with Social Security, the Republican leadership in Congress has agreed that we should set aside 62 percent of the surplus to save Social Security. I think it's important that we do it in the right way: We should put 75 years of life on the Trust Fund; we should do something about elderly women whose poverty rate is twice the rate of seniors; and we ought to lift the earnings limit so that seniors who want to work can do that.

Now, unfortunately, we do not agree on whether to set aside another 15 percent of the surplus to save Medicare. Of course, we will have our disagreements about how Medicare should be reformed. I think it should be reformed and kept solvent for 20 years, and also, we should add a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program. And I don't want to kid you. I think because of the numbers of people that are going to retire in the baby boom generation, and because we're all living longer, and because of medical advances which at least in their early years are more expensive, we will have to make some further reforms in Medicare, even if we do what I want.

But if we set aside 15 percent of the surplus for the next 15 years for Medicare, we can at least guarantee that it's all right till 2020. If we don't, we'll be faced with possible changes in Medicare that could undermine the universality of the program and its absolute reliability for seniors and for the children and grandchildren of seniors who don't have to pay those out-of-pocket medical expenses. So this is a huge issue.

Now, our friends in the other party say that we ought to just reform Medicare and maybe shift some of the costs to seniors -- who may not be able to afford it -- and maybe get away from Medicare as a defined benefit program. I am against that. I do not want to see Medicare turned from a defined benefit program into a defined contribution program.

But think of what we can do if we set aside part of this surplus, which will allow us to pay down even more of our debt and put 20 years on the Medicare Trust Fund's life, and then we can figure out how to make what other changes need to be made to strengthen the program and how to add the prescription drug program.

Now, that will cost more money in the short run, but over the long run, adding the prescription drug benefit will cut down on doctor visits; will cut down on hospital costs; will cut down on critical care costs, because with all these advances in medical research, people will be able to stay healthier. The best way to cut down on the cost of the Medicare program is to keep seniors healthier for longer periods of time, and the medicine will help us to do that.

I believe the American people should have some tax relief out of this surplus, but I think we should save Social Security and Medicare first. Then I think we should focus the tax relief on helping working people and the middle class begin to save from their first day on the job, so they will have a piece of this enormous wealth that America has enjoyed in the last 6 years. That's what our USA accounts -- our Universal Savings Accounts -- will do.

So the choice the American people will face is our plan -- which invests the surplus for tomorrow and focuses the tax relief on working families and the need to save -- and theirs, which spends a lot more of the surplus today. Ours favors savings; theirs favors consumption. Ours focuses tax relief on the middle class, and theirs -- well, theirs is a Republican tax plan. *[Laughter]*

I think at least this administration and our leaders in Congress ought to be entitled to the benefit of the doubt, based on the performance of the economy in the last 6 years. Their economic theory gave us 12 years of rising deficits and declining incomes. Our economic strategy has given us growth and surpluses. When I took office, the national debt had risen to one-half our annual income.

If we adopt my plan for the surplus, in 15 years, it will be just 7 percent of our annual income. That's the lowest it's been since right before we entered World War I in 1917. What that means in practical terms to you is that when I took office, we were spending over 14 cents of every dollar you paid in taxes just to make our interest payments on the debt. In 15 years that will be down to 2 cents on the dollar. The rest can be spent on you and your children and your future. And within 18 years, the United States of America would be debt-free.

Think of it: If we just have the discipline to do the right thing -- and I'll say more in a minute why it's good for the economy -- we could save Social Security for 75 years, save Medicare for 20

years, and get the United States of America out of debt. I think that is the right thing to do.

But I don't want to pretend that their plan won't sound good, sound sweet, and sound simple. All I ask you is to look at the performance of our country in the last 6 years, and give us the benefit of the doubt, and support us. Let's save Social Security. Let's not let Medicare be dissolved. Let's not let it be changed fundamentally in its character. And let's pay down this debt to keep America's economy strong.

Now, the second thing we have to do is to keep the economy growing and to deal with crises as they occur. We have to have a strategy to keep the global economy working for Americans, as well as to increase the economic development here at home.

For the first 5 years of my Presidency, 30 percent of our economic growth came from increasing exports, and manufacturing employment in America increased. But last year, because of the global financial crisis, which has left Russia, most of Asia, in a deep recession, and has slowed growth dramatically in most of Latin America, the manufacturing sector in our country was hit very hard. We saw many, many jobs lost, and we know many more than those that were lost are still threatened. Industrial America is hurting now.

I have worked hard to limit this global financial crisis, to try to right the things that are out of whack, to help our trading partners return to economic growth in a healthy way so that they could buy our products instead of dump on our markets. We need a 21st century financial and trading system that limits the cycle of boom and bust, that strengthens social safety nets, that works for ordinary working people and their families in every country. In short, the United States must lead a crusade to put a more human face on the global economy.

While we are doing that -- and I expect to spend an enormous amount of time this year working on that, so that we can reduce the likelihood that we'll have years in the future like the last year has been -- we cannot let other economies' difficulties be a justification or an excuse for them to violate trade laws and engage in unfair trade practices.

Make no mistake about it. It was not economic difficulty and the declining value of currency which made foreign goods cheaper, which precipitated the present crisis in steel. This was not an ordinary economic event. We know it was the result of unfair trade practices. We have used tools that are unprecedented in this kind of dispute to respond.

The Secretary of Commerce speeded up consideration of the dumping cases. We just announced that both Japan and Brazil have been dumping steel into our markets. We've put them on notice that the surge in exports is unacceptable, and this means that anyone who imports steel from Japan or Brazil must pay large deposits or post substantial bonds to the U.S. Customs Service. Paying these duties will likely reduce further unfair steel imports from these countries.

We've also made it clear to Korea in no uncertain terms that they cannot fill the void with unfair trade practices, and so far they have been responsive, though we'll continue to watch it closely.

As you know, we're in negotiations with Russia on a comprehensive agreement to reduce their steel exports to the United States. The goal of all these actions is to get imports back to their pre-crisis level when our steel industry was competing just fine with every-body in the world. And again, if we have a fair policy and we don't have unfair penetration, that will happen.

Now, I know that for a lot of hard-pressed plants, workers, families, communities, these trade laws work too slowly. But we are accelerating the pace at which they will work to the maximum ability to do so. December numbers show a 32 percent decline in steel imports across-the-board, a 67 percent decline in hot-rolled steel.

Now, I would just like to make one observation about that. For all those people who said that all these imports were just the product of ordinary economic activity and, therefore, we shouldn't do

anything, the fact that they could cut hot-rolled steel exports from their countries to us 67 percent in one month pretty well destroyed the argument that it was ordinary economic activity that led to them in the first place.

In the case of Japan, we have made it clear that if their exports don't return to pre-crisis levels, we're prepared to take appropriate action, including self-initiation of trade cases, something that is almost unprecedented. I will work very closely with you as we move forward. This has been a tough year for the steel workers and for many other manufacturing workers. We need to do more. And we will keep at it until we turn the crisis around.

The challenge we face, however, goes beyond steel. We have to make sure that the world economy works for everyone. As George said in his opening remarks, we've had some disagreements about this in the past. Trade has divided Americans for a long time. I want you to know, however, that I am determined to do whatever I can to find common ground on this issue that will enable labor and business, environmentalists and government in the United States to work together.

I support open markets because it has given us higher incomes and more jobs, and for the first time in anyone's memory, now the United States has the lowest unemployment rate in the industrialized world, even lower than Japan. No one can remember a time when that was the case. It's been a very, very long time.

Now, the right kind of trade is good for working families. And when a financial crisis hits our trading partners, we can see the devastating effect it has on them and on others here at home. But again I say we can't allow international economic competition or adversity elsewhere to become a race to the bottom here at home or in any other country.

My goal has got to be to level the world up, not level it down. That means we have to press for more open markets that have stronger safeguards for workers, not weaker ones, for health and safety, for children, for a clean environment. A trade that honors the rights of workers and the dignity of work, that respects core labor rights. We have to do that.

We should do more not only through the trade framework but with the international labor organizations to raise labor standards around the world and to lead the world community to conclude a treaty that bans child labor everywhere in the world.

Now, if we save Social Security and Medicare, if we can keep the economy going in the midst of all these troubles, the third thing that we have to do is to make sure that the economy works for all of our people and that adversity can be quickly overcome. If we can't do it now, when will we ever do it? That's why we ought to increase the minimum wage again. Ten million working families need it, and we ought to do it.

That's why we should expand the family and medical leave law to cover 10 million more workers and their families. It is not broad enough in its coverage. If we can't afford it now, when will we ever get around to doing it?

And that's why we have to recognize, also, that there are people in this country, in urban communities and rural areas, who have not felt any upturn in the last 6 years. That's what my new markets initiative is all about.

You know, we have all kinds of devices to help encourage Americans to invest in developing countries overseas, that aren't present here. One of the things that I have proposed is an "American Private Investment Company," modeled on our Overseas Private Investment Corporation, that would enable us to give both tax credits and loan guarantees to people who would invest in high unemployment areas in America, to put in new plants and new businesses, to create new markets and new jobs.

Let me just give you an example of how it would work, because I'm going to need your help to

pass this. New York City -- while America has a 4.4 percent unemployment rate, the unemployment rate in New York City is about 9 percent. Now, when you consider how low it is in some places in New York City, that means in a lot of big urban centers, it's well over 10 percent. If this whole plan passes, and a group of people got together, for example, under these laws that I have proposed, to spend \$ 300 million and open a plant in a high unemployment area in Brooklyn or the Bronx, or they wanted to -- to use Congressman Rangel's favorite example -- they wanted to rehabilitate Yankee Stadium instead of moving it away and hire construction workers who live in the Bronx to do it -- suppose they wanted to do that. Under our plan, if this law passes, they put up \$ 300 million; the first \$ 100 million, they get a 25 percent tax credit for. The second \$ 200 million, they'd have a loan guarantee for, which means they'd only have \$ 75 million at risk for the \$ 300 million investment.

That's a good deal. The best untapped markets for American business are here in America, and it will lower everybody else's threshold of anxiety; it will create economic opportunity. It's good for the steel workers. It's good for the machinists. It's good for the auto workers, because if those people have jobs, they'll buy more of everything. And I want you to help me pass it.

I also ask you to help me strengthen our education system, to finish the job of cutting class sizes by putting 100,000 new teachers into our schools, to pass our proposal to build or modernize 6,000 schools.

And I ask you to do something that will be quite controversial. I hope you will support me in this. Every 5 years, we pass an authorization law which sets the terms under which we give our tax money back to public schools. And it's about \$ 15 billion a year now that we give to schools to help them do their work. We now know -- from teachers, from principals, from parents, from students themselves, from worlds of research -- what works in the schools and what doesn't. We know that every problem in American education has been solved by somebody some-where. But we know something else: Our kids, a representative sample of our kids -- represented by race, income, and region -- scores at the top of the world in the 4th grade math and science tests, drops to the middle of the world by the 8th grade, and is nearly at the bottom by the 12th.

Now, those children do not get dumber as they get older. That means we are not doing well enough by them, and we have to do better. We have to make sure all these kids can read well when they're in elementary school no matter what their family back-ground or where their folks came from.

So I say, we need to change the terms in which we give out this money, not because the Federal Government makes it up in a room somewhere but because the schools have told us what works. We ought to end social promotion, but we ought to do it by saying we want to end social promotion, but we don't want to declare the kids failures because the system's failing them. So we ought to provide more funds for summer school programs, for after-school programs, for tutors -- keep the kids out of trouble, off the streets, in the schools learning, but make sure they know something when they go from grade to grade.

The teachers' organizations have asked us repeatedly to make one requirement that every school has not only a written, reasonable discipline policy, but can prove it's being enforced. That's important.

They ought to identify schools that are failing and turn them down or shut them down. Every State that's done this has found that they hardly have to shut any schools down, because they get turned around once they know that they're going to be shut down unless they do turn around.

These are elemental things that have worked in community after community after community. I think parents ought to get a report card on every school, every year, that their children are in. I think if we do these things, you'll be amazed at the results we'll have 5 years from now, when we have to reauthorize this aid again.

But this will be real controversial. Some people will say it's too tough on the kids that come from poor backgrounds. I think that's selling them short. They can do just fine, if they have good schools. And I'll tell you something, if they get out of school without a good education, the world's going to be real tough on them. And so we need to help them.

And then some of our friends in the other party will say, "Well, here's the President trying to micromanage the schools. We just want to give them the money. We're not trying to tell the schools what to do." Well, that would be true if I had just sat in my office one day and come up with this and thought it sounded good. This is what the people at the grassroots level have said and done and proved works. And it is simply wrong for us to keep subsidizing failure when we can invest in success. So I ask you to help us.

Just two other things, very quickly: I want you to help me this year do what we didn't do last year, and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Now, a lot of you know -- a lot of you know, or you're about to find out in very difficult ways that after years of moderate inflation in health care costs those premiums are going up again, even for managed care. And if you're going to pay for health care, you ought to be able to get health care. If you need to see a specialist, you ought to be able to see one. If you have options for health care, you ought to know what your options are. If you're in another town and you get hit in an accident, you ought to be able to go to the nearest emergency room, not one that's halfway across town. If you're in the middle of treatment with a doctor, you ought to be able to continue the treatment even if you change health care providers. These are elemental things.

The last thing I want to say, if you want the economy to work for everybody -- I want to come back to something I said before -- I know this is an alien concept; if I had been running for President in 1992 -- and many of you did so much for me -- and I said, look, you vote for me and 6 years from now I'll be coming back to you telling you what great things will happen if we pay down the national debt, you would have decided that I needed a trip to a doctor, not to be elected President. But we can talk about that now.

We want the economy to work for everyone. You don't know what's going to happen beyond our borders. I am doing my best to turn this situation around, to do everything I can to make sure we don't have another year like the year we just had in the global economy, with all the trade problems and other things that came down on us. But if, God forbid, we continue to have these kinds of problems, don't we want the strongest demand we have here at home? Don't we want to be able to -- and if we do more to protect our markets from unfair trade practices, then it still means that we're going to have to generate more economic activity here at home.

If you pay down the debt, what will happen? Interest rates will stay down, much lower than they otherwise would, no matter what happens around the world. That means lower home mortgage payments; it means lower car payments; it means lower business loans; it means lower student loans; it means lower credit card payments. It means greater investment in the American economy, more jobs, and lower prices and higher consumption. That's what it means.

Now, I do not know what is going to happen everywhere in the world in the next 2 years, much less after I'm gone. But I know this: If you'll go along with this and you'll help me do this, for the next 15 years, every single year the interest rates in America and the economy in America will be in better shape, no matter what happens, than they would have been if we don't do it and we give away this money right now. So I ask you to help me do this. This is a right thing to do for the United States of America.

Finally, let me just say there are a lot of changes going on in the world. No one can predict the future with any certainty. Tell you the truth, it's all worked out a little better, until this last rough patch in the road for us, than I thought it would when I was running. But I knew we were doing the right things.

One of the things we know is, if we put the American people first -- if we think about how people

can balance work and family, if we think about how we can preserve the dignity of work, if we think about how we can give every child the right to live up to his or her God-given capacity -- if we do the right things, then in the tough times we'll do better than we otherwise would have, and in the good times we'll soar.

The American labor movement has helped this country to do the right things year-in and year-out, decade-in and decade-out. In joining together, I am convinced you have done the right thing for your members and their families for the 21st century. And I am convinced that you will do the right things for America.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in Hall A at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to R. Thomas Buffenbarger, international president, International Association of Machinists (IAM); Ruben Burks, secretary-general, and Stephen P. Yokich, president, United Auto Workers (UAW); George Becker, president, United Steel Workers Association (USWA), who introduced the President; and John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO. The IAM, UAW, and USWA merged to form one labor **union**.

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Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

May 4, 1998

CITE: 34 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 777**LENGTH:** 2044 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks at a California Labor Initiative Breakfast in Los Angeles, California**BODY:**

Thank you very much. I want to thank John Sweeney for those kind words and for his brilliant leadership in giving new life and energy and direction to the American labor movement. Thank you, Doug Dority and all the other labor leaders who are here. I thank Ron and Jan for opening their home to us and letting us relive the movie fantasies of the last 60 years here in this great old house.

I'd also like to say a special work of appreciation to my longtime friend John Garamendi for his distinguished leadership as Deputy Secretary of the Interior, and he's now gone to work with Ron. And I wish him well in private life. He also got a daughter married off last weekend; he assures me it is survivable, but I'm not so certain. *[Laughter]* I thank the Members of Congress who are here, and Lt. Governor Davis, thank you for coming.

I would like to just say a few words to all of you who have come here to this fundraiser. First of all, you wouldn't be here if you didn't believe what I think is an elemental truth of the modern economy, which is that we can only have a good economy and a good society if we find ways to widen the circle of opportunity and to reward people for their labors. And insofar as we reward people for doing the right things, then those who are especially well-positioned will do even better.

John mentioned the Therma plant up in Silicon Valley I visited. Most people think that most of the places that are doing well up there are computer companies or biotech companies, but someone has to build all those buildings that they work in, and someone has to supply them with what they need. And that plant, as John said, is a family-owned business with 1,600 workers, most of whom are sheet metal workers, a few of whom are in the plumbers **union**, but they're all unionized, and yet they have all the things that the enemies of **organized labor** always say you never see. They have a flexible workplace; they have incredible partnerships with their owners, and the people who run that plant are very, very proud with their relationship with the **union** and with the people on the floor. And they have a modern workplace in which no one wants to leave, because they think they're getting their fair share of the labor, and because they believe their labor is respected.

We have tried to do that. I was very disturbed when I became President that our country had had 20 years of increasing inequality among working people. And there were many reasons for it, some of them unavoidable, because we were changing the nature of the American economy, and whenever you change the nature of an economy -- it happens about once every 50 or 60 years -- the people that are really in the best positions do best. It happened when we went from being agricultural to an industrial economy. But a lot of it was because our people weren't well-equipped and weren't being treated fairly, and that people didn't understand that we had to make extra effort.

So I want to thank the labor movement and John Sweeney and all the other labor leaders for the things they've supported that their own members were not the primary beneficiaries of. Most of the people that got the benefit of the Family and Medical Leave Act were working people who did not have the benefit of **union** representation. Most of the people who got the benefit of the increase in the minimum wage, directly or indirectly, most, if not all, were **union** people -- were not **union**

workers. Most of the people who get the benefit of the earned-income tax credit, which is now worth \$ 1,000 a year to a family of four with an income of under \$ 30,000, and it's lifted 2.2 million children out of poverty -- were working families that did not belong to **unions**. And so I thank you for being the voice, all of you, not only for your members but for those who are not members of **organized labor**.

Now, when you look ahead to the future, it seems to me one of the great challenges still facing us is how every single person in our country, and ultimately in other parts of the world, can feel that there is some way they can live out their dreams, raise a family, live a life that makes sense in this new world we're living in.

And it's funny, because one of the things that has clearly happened, with more and more people on the Internet, more and more kids on the Internet at school, more and more people being able to individually access information, is that there really is a new upsurge in the world today in people's desire to have more individual control over their destiny.

We're in the process now of reviewing the Social Security system, for example, and there's this huge age differential -- young people all say, well, we should have -- not all, but a lot of young people say, "We should have individual accounts, and we'll decide how to invest it." Older people remember that the stock market has not always gone from 3,000 to 9,000 in any 5-year period -- and so they say, "Well, you better have a little bit of protection here for what happens on the days when it's not so good."

This initiative on the California ballot can be seen against that background. The people of California have been very good to me and my family and my administration. And I have watched with interest as the State has emerged from its economic recession, starting in 1993 and coming forward -- Californians, in the most popular State in the country and a State where it's fairly easy to get an initiative on the ballot, have been asked to come to grips with issues that are being debated.

Now, I think sometimes these ballot initiatives have dealt with real problems, but at least from my point of view, with the wrong solution. For example, if you look at this ballot initiative on bilingual education, I think there is a significant problem in the -- I think the way we are handling immigrant children, integrating them into our education system, integrating them into the mainstream of American life, is inadequate. I don't think it's working as well as it should. But I think the proposal on the ballot will make it worse, not better. That my only -- but at least they're debating a real issue. And I'm hopeful on that issue that the voters of California will be able to think it through. And I applaud the speaker of the House here who tried to get an alternative measure through to deal with it in what I believe is a much more positive way.

This issue dealing with labor **unions** and the relationship with labor **unions** to their members, I think it's an entirely different one. This is an issue, in my view, which seeks to take a legitimate principle, which is that people should not have their money spent against their will, and turn it into a ballot initiative that will simply put organizations that represent working people at a significant competitive disadvantage to other organizations in the political marketplace.

So this is something that sounds good, but isn't -- not something that's dealing with a real problem. There is no real problem here. And that's what you have to get out to the people of California.

John and I -- on the way in, he pointed out that, again, that it is labor **union** members who do not wish their dues money, others who do not wish their voluntary check-off money to be spent on political purposes, can inform their **unions** of that and get back a portion of their money. I think you said -- Gerry McEntee said 33,000 AFSCME members got back a portion of their money last year. This is not a problem. This is being put forth as a problem. This is not a problem that exists. No one is making labor **union** members contribute to political campaigns.

Now, what this amendment seeks to do is to basically muffle the ability of the collective voices of working people to be heard by putting on them a far, far greater administrative burden than corporations face when they spend their own money -- they don't have to get their shareholders' permission every year -- or other organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, the NFIB, any other membership organization that spends money either to support candidates or to affect ballot initiatives or other political issues.

Why should labor **unions** be singled out when they already give their members a better voice at opting out of the system than a lot of other organizations do? Why should we have a system where we say -- let me tell you, I've been in Washington now for 5 years -- we haven't always agreed on everything. John Sweeney and I don't agree on every issue. But I'll tell you something: If it were up to them, every American would have health care tonight, every child would go to bed tonight not worrying whether or not there would be a doctor there if the baby woke up at 3 o'clock in the morning.

We have family and medical leave. We have this very different tax system for lowincome working families. We have all these things in our balanced budget agreement; we've got the biggest increase in child health care in 35 years -- going to provide 5 million children with health insurance.

We have virtually opened the doors of college to every American, in no small measure because American labor was working up there in the Congress to try to pass this. This is a better country because of them.

I don't know what the 30-second message is because I'm not part of the ad team out here, but I can tell you this: I believe if the people of California understood, clearly, that every member of every **union** in America has a right at any time to say, "I do not want my money spent, my dues money spent, to lobby on ballot initiatives or spent for political purposes" -- that that is a far more expensive thing that applies to other organizations as a practical matter, and that this is just an attempt to put **unions** at a disadvantage to other organized groups in the political marketplace, and thereby to diminish the voice of working men and women -- and keep in mind -- and for people who are not members of **unions** for whom they speak who would otherwise have no voice -- who would otherwise have no voice.

That family and medical leave thing, we had 170 other countries that had family and medical leave for goodness sakes, and we still have people in the United States Congress saying, "Oh, if you do this, it will cost America jobs."

And that's what this is about. And I honestly believe if you can just tell the people of California the facts, that no man or woman in any labor **union** anywhere in California or in the country is being ripped off, that they can reallocate their money when they want to, they can say, "I do not want this to happen." And then they understood that this ballot initiative does not apply to business organizations; it does not apply to other organizations; it does not apply to corporations; I think the innate sense of fairness of the people out here will prevail. And all of you who are contributing here at this breakfast today are giving the people who are running this campaign a chance to do that.

But I really believe that it's important that the message get out there that is not like -- a lot of these other ballot initiatives are dealing with real, legitimate problems, and then you're just arguing over whether this is the right solution to a real problem. This is not a real problem. This is an attempt to create the impression that individual members of **unions** are being put upon when they aren't. And it's being done to alter the balance of power in the political debate.

And so I hope very much you will prevail, and I hope my being here helps you a little bit. And I hope between now and the time it's voted on, enough people will understand the facts. This is why we're -- if they really know the facts, I think you'll win.

Good luck, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:22 a.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; Douglas H. Dority, international president, United Food and Commercial Workers International **Union**; breakfast hosts Ron and Janet Burkle; Lt. Gov. Gray Davis of California; State Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villaraigosa; and Gerald W. McEntee, president, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

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Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

September 24, 1997

CITE: 33 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1401**LENGTH:** 5370 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks to the **AFL-CIO** Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**BODY:**

Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here. Thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you for the fast introduction. [Laughter]

The last time I spoke at your convention it was 2 days before you elected John and Rich and Linda. And I must say, from the outside, it seems to me that they have done a remarkable job, and I know that you must be very, very proud of them.

I am delighted to be here with Secretary Herman and Deputy Secretary Kitty Higgins and Secretary Slater -- a number of other members of the administration. I should mention one other, the successor at the White House to Alexis Herman, former Assistant Secretary of Labor for Wage and Hours Maria Echaveste. We're all glad to be here.

I also want to say right at the outset that I am very glad that you voted to support campaign finance reform. Now there will be a vote on the Senate floor, and that will be a time of testing. But I have made clear where I stand. All 45 of our Democratic Senators have made clear where they stand. You have now made clear where you stand. We will soon see where the Senate stands, and then where the House stands. This is a good time to make our campaign finance laws better, and I thank you for your crucial role in it.

On a very personal word, I might say, I came in a few moments ago and I was able to hear Sandy Feldman, and hear your tribute to our friend, Al Shanker. And I cannot tell you how much I appreciate that. Under his leadership, and Sandy's the AFT has been a constant supporter of educational opportunity and educational excellence -- a clear signal that working professionals can be organized for the objectives, the legitimate objectives of the union movement. And one of these objectives would be excellence on the job. And there is no more important place to have excellence on the job than in educating our children. So I'm very, very grateful for the AFT and for Sandy Feldman.

With your new leadership team and the new energy I feel, of the presidents who are here on this great stage, and all of you in the audience, your members back home, it is clear that American labor once again has a clear voice and you are making it heard. You made it heard loud and proud in the boardrooms of United Parcel Service. You made it heard in the halls of the Capitol, standing up to a barrage of anti-worker legislation.

You're making it heard in the strawberry and mushroom fields of California, in the fiery tones of Arturo Rodriguez, with noble echoes of Cesar Chavez. You're making it heard in nursing homes in Minnesota, giving new strength to women workers. And you're making it heard right here in Pittsburgh through the steelworkers biggest organizing campaign in more than 60 years. This must be a proud time for the men and women of the AFL-CIO.

Our Nation can clearly see and hear that American labor is back. Thanks in no small part to your leadership in the workplace and your involvement in the political process, America is back, too.

Six years ago, when I announced my candidacy for President, I said that America had a vital

mission for the 21st century -- to keep the American dream alive for every person responsible enough to work for it, to keep America the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity; and to bring our people together across all the lines that divide us into one America. America's oldest, most incandescent ideals -- opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all -- that is what has to illuminate our path as we stride forward to address the challenges of a new era.

I pledged then to take America in a new direction -- toward the future, not the past; toward unity, not division; with America leading, not following; putting people and values, not power politics, first; reforming Government not to do everything or do nothing, but to give all our people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives; and beginning by building an economy that works for all, not the few.

We started with a new economic policy for the new economy, putting in place a bold new strategy to shrink the deficit and balance the budget, invest in our people and lower unfair trade barriers to our goods and services. The philosophy was solid and simple: Remove the impediments that have restrained the American people and give them the tools and training to help them race ahead. By reducing the Nation's massive deficits, we could free our people of the deadweight that slowed their every step from the early 1980's. By investing in their education and health, we would enable them to run fast and strong over the long run. By reducing trade barriers, we would knock down the unfairly high hurdles that we have had to leap over for far too long, and build bridges to new democracies with growing economies to ensure our leadership for peace and freedom well into the next century.

The strategy has succeeded: nearly 13 million new jobs; America leading the world in auto production once again; unemployment below 5 percent; over a million new construction jobs, a half a million transportation jobs, a half a million new jobs for machine operators, auto jobs having the fastest increase since Lyndon Johnson's administration; the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history, with welfare reform that is tough on work, but pro-child and pro-family; dramatic drops in crime year after year, putting 100,000 more community police officers on the street and the Brady bill preventing 250,000 sales of handguns to people with criminal or mental health histories that indicates they should not have them. We know we have more to do, but together we have made progressive government work again.

Let's look at three crucial elements of our economic strategy, reducing the deficit, investing in our people, expanding exports. First, deficit reduction. Back in 1993, when I introduced our first deficit reduction plan, we both knew it was important to get our fiscal house in order, and we did it the right way. We did it while increasing investments in our people. And we did it without a single Republican vote, cutting the huge deficit of \$ 290 billion 87 percent before the new balanced budget law passed.

After a new majority took control of Congress in 1994, they tried to cut the deficit in the wrong way. They sent me a budget that made unjustifiably deep cuts in Medicare, that increased taxes on working Americans, that allowed corporations to raid their workers' pensions, that cut enforcement of worker safety laws, that slashed funding for education and training by \$ 30 billion. With your support, I vetoed that budget and the veto was upheld.

Later, when they pushed a balanced budget with a harmful independent contractor provision, a misguided privatization scheme for Medicaid, and a shameful plan to deny workfare participants the minimum wage, you and I stood firm together. We stood firm together. And I thank you for your support for that opposition.

I believe this balanced budget that I signed honors our workers and our values and our future. And I will explain by going to the second element of our economic strategy, investing in our people. In the new economy, the most precious resources America has are the skills and securities of working Americans. Here, too, we are succeeding. After decades of working harder and longer for lower wages, millions of working Americans finally are getting a raise. And it's about time.

Since I took office, the yearly income of the typical family is up \$ 1,600. Wages are rising again. In 1995 and 1996, over half the new jobs created in this economy paid above the average wage. With your strong support, we also increased the minimum wage and dramatically increased the earned-income tax credit -- it is now worth about \$ 1,000 a year to the typical family of four with an income of less than \$ 30,000. And this summer, I signed into law a \$ 500-per-child tax credit that will mean \$ 1,000 in take-home pay for a typical family with two children. And I didn't sign the bill until we made it work for rookie police officers, teachers, and others of modest means the Republican majority would have left out of their budget and tax cut plans.

From 1945 until the mid-1970's, all of us grew together in America. Each group of our economy, from the lowest 20 percent to the highest, increased their incomes, but actually, in percentage terms, those in the bottom 40 percent grew slightly faster than those in the upper 40 percent. And that was as it should have been. We were sharing our prosperity and growing together.

Then, unfortunately, we began to grow apart, partly because of developments in the global economy, historic developments that could not be reversed and offer us great opportunity if we seize them, partly I believe, because of wrong-headed policies in the United States Government throughout the 1980's.

Fortunately, now it looks like our hard work and your hard work is paying off and America is starting to grow together again. I believe the general sense that this should be so is one of the reasons for the renewed success and receptivity of the efforts that you are making all over America.

But we cannot rest. We cannot rest until every single American has a fair chance to reap the rewards of the American economy. That is why, above all, investing in people means giving every American the best education in the world.

Our balanced budget includes the largest increase in aid to education since 1965, when President Johnson was in office, and the biggest increase to help people go on to college since the GI bill was passed 50 years ago. The budget has \$ 1 billion more for Head Start; more money to help our schools achieve excellence; the America Reads program to mobilize a million volunteers, organized by our national service program, AmeriCorps, which has already given 70,000 young people a chance to work and serve in their communities and earn the money for college. It contains money to help connect every classroom and library in this country to the Internet by the year 2000. It also contains a new HOPE scholarship to guarantee access to all Americans to at least 2 years of college; other tuition tax credits for all college and skills training; an IRA you can withdraw from, tax-free, to pay for your own education or your children's education; the biggest increase in Pell grants in two decades; a million, total, work-study slots now; and doubling aid for dislocated workers.

When you put all this together, we can really say for the first time in the history of this country, we have opened the doors of college education to every American who is willing to work for it. Money will not be an obstacle again.

There is still a lot to do. First of all, we have to pass every year for the next 5 years the funds necessary to make good on the budget agreement. Secondly, we have got to increase the quality of education in our public schools. I have sought to provide more options to parents in public school through public school choice and allowing teachers to organize new charter schools within public school districts. But I also know we need national standards. Every other major economy in the world educates its children according to national academic standards. And I have called for national standards and voluntary national exams to begin with fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math to see how our children are doing. Voluntary exams developed not by politicians, but by a non-political board; not by the Department of Education, but financially supported by the Department of Education.

There are those who say no to this, no to standards, no to the idea that we ought to have accountability. Some of them, frankly, don't believe all our children can learn. Some of them see some dark plot to take over local schools. All I see is reading is the same in Minnesota as it is in Maine, and mathematics is the same in Washington as it is in Florida. And our children had better know it if they expect to compete in the world of the 21st century.

There are also those in the Congress who say no to every effort we make to expand educational opportunity -- those who failed to close the Department of Education, but would still like to cut it down; those who still would reduce our commitment to scholarships and grants and shut down completely innovative initiatives, like America Reads, even though we know -- we know -- that 40 percent of our third graders still cannot read independently on their own. We know that, and we cannot afford to back up. We need to bear down.

So I need to ask your help again on education in the tough days ahead. With your help we can open up opportunity, build up education, and shake up the status quo crowd that fights every effort we make to lift up our children.

We are making progress in this country in education. The teachers of this country are doing a better job, the principals are doing a better job, parents are steadily getting more involved. We are learning how to come to grips with all the social problems that our kids bring to school. This year, on international exams, a representative sample of our children by race, by region, by income -- for the first time the fourth graders scored above the global average in mathematics and science. So I know all children can learn, and I know we've got people who can do the job. We just have to support them and bear down, and do more of the kinds of things that we know will work.

Al Shanker, for his whole adult life, advocated national standards and meaningful measures and then all the efforts necessary to give every kid in this country a chance to learn. And I am not going to back away from this if it takes me every last minute of the next 3 years and however many months and days I've got left. And you ought to be there, too, because there's nothing more important for the future of this country than giving our kids a decent education.

Investing in our people also means protecting the rights of workers, to demand their rights. Over the past 4 years, we've defeated callous attempts to repeal prevailing wage laws, to bring back company unions, to weaken occupational safety laws. We cracked down on sweatshops and fought to protect your pension funds and make pensions more portable. I have vetoed every piece of antilabor legislation that has crossed my desk, and I will continue to do so. [Applause] Thank you.

A lot of the people pushing these bills have missed the main point. The key to success in tomorrow's economy is people, and you cannot move into the 21st century by restoring the labor policies of the 19th century. I will oppose it, you will oppose it, and we will prevail.

In that context, let me just say one more word about the UPS strike. I and, indeed, my entire administration believe deeply in the collective bargaining process. In the UPS strike, collective bargaining worked. UPS and the Teamsters reached an historic settlement that recognizes that companies have to invest in their workers in order to be competitive in the 21st century. I did the right thing to let the process work. The parties got together, they worked through it and we got a good result. [Applause] Thank you.

Investing in people also means expanding access to health care, quality health care. The family and medical leave law that you worked so hard for, the very first bill I signed as President, ensures that millions of people don't have to choose between being good parents and good workers. I still hear from citizens as I travel across the country and just stop at airports, or in crowds in communities and shake hands -- people still come up to me and say, that law changed my life, saved my family, has meant more to me than anything the Government has done in my life. It is a good thing, and I thank you for your support of it.

The Kennedy-Kassebaum law helps millions to keep their health care if they take a new job or if

someone in their family gets sick. The new balanced budget spends \$ 24 billion to expand health care to 5 million of the most vulnerable Americans -- 5 million children almost all in working families, without health insurance. That is the largest investment in health care since the creation of Medicaid in 1965. Never -- never -- would this have happened unless you had helped me wage the fight we waged and lost to give health insurance to every American family that doesn't have it. And sometimes you have to lose a battle. I'm glad we fought for it. I'm proud that you helped me. And those kids are going to get insurance because of the issues we raised in 1994.

Finally, I ask for your support to help me pass sweeping legislation to keep tobacco, our number one health problem, out of the hands of our children. The health of our children is my bottom line and I believe it should be the bottom line of the tobacco industry as well.

The final component of our three-part economic strategy, one that is just as essential for the future growth and the future wage growth of our economy, is our continuing work to open new markets and give American workers a fair break. I know we don't see eye-to-eye on fast track, but I think I owe it to you to tell you exactly why I feel so passionately about it. And I think I've earned the right to be heard on it.

Fast-track authority is a tool that has been given by Democratic Congresses to Republican Presidents and Presidents, indeed, of both parties for more than 20 years now. It simply says that if the President or his representative, his trade representative, negotiates a trade agreement, then the Congress has to vote on it if it rises to the level of comprehensive agreement, but must vote it up or down, so that the other country does not believe it is having to negotiate with 535 people in addition to the person with whom they negotiated.

We cannot create enough good jobs and increase wages if we don't expand trade. There's a simple reason why. Indeed, about a third of the economic growth that has produced 13 million new jobs over the past 4 1/2 years has come from selling more American products overseas. Here's why: We have 4 percent of the world's population and we enjoy 22 percent of the world's wealth. If we want to keep the 22 percent of the wealth we have as 4 percent of the world's people, we have to sell something to the other 96 percent.

And this did not happen by accident. There were over 220 trade agreements signed in the first 4 years of this administration. In the over 20 agreements signed with Japan, in those areas, our exports went up by over 80 percent.

The information technology agreement that we just signed, worldwide, covering 90 percent of information technology services in the world, under residual fast-track authority that covered that area, amounts to a \$ 5-billion tax or tariff cut on American products -- high value-added products, many of which are made by union workers.

Now, in the next 15 years, the developing countries in Latin America and Asia will grow three times as fast as the United States, Europe, and Japan. As I told the United Nations a couple of days ago, early in the next century, about 20 nations comprising half of the world's people will move from the ranks of low income nations to middle income nations. They are going to grow in a world economy. We are going to participate in that growth to a greater or lesser extent. The more fair trade deals we have to allow us entry into their markets where we've been at a significant disadvantage for too long, the more we will participate.

You know that our own markets are among the most open in the world. We were able to get 220 trade agreements in the first 4 years because we made people know that if they wanted access to our open markets, they were going to have to open theirs. We have to insist upon this treatment. If we don't act and we don't lead, nobody else will level the playing field for us.

Indeed, our competitors in the other wealthy countries, in Europe and Japan, would just as soon we not make these trade agreements. They can make them because they read the same predictions we do -- they know that their economies are only going to grow a third as fast as the

ones in Latin America and Asia as well, and they are looking for some way in to protect their workers and their longtime economic security.

We can compete if given a fair chance. Last year, I had a chance to visit the Jeep Cherokee plant in Toledo, a UAW plant producing tens of thousands of right-wheel-drive jeeps for export to Japan and other markets we thought hard to open up for them. They have 700 new jobs at that plant, and I think it's the oldest auto plant in the United States of America still operating. The global economy is working for them. I am determined to see that it works for everyone.

Should we ask other people to adhere to global standards on the environment? Of course, we should. I think you could make a strong case that no administration has done more to preserve and protect the environment against onslaughts than ours has. Should we acknowledge that global trade can pull the rug out from some of our people? Of course, it could. At every period of economic change in our country's history, that has happened to people. The difference is that we have to be committed to give more aid, to do more for people who are suffering, who are displaced. Because nobody should be left behind in the global economy -- nobody. That's why we double funding for displaced workers. That's why I know we have to do more. We don't have to leave people behind. Everybody should have the right to keep a good job and to go into tomorrow.

But we can only do that with a growing population if we continue to grow the economy. So the trick is to get the right economic growth package, to create the right mix of new jobs, to try to make sure always more than half of your new jobs are paying above average wage, and not leave people behind. It's not easy to do, but this administration is committed to doing it. And I think we have demonstrated that commitment time and again.

We also have to recognize that the global economy is on a fast track. It is changing amazingly. For example, every month -- every month -- millions and millions of new contacts are made on the Internet -- every single month. It's exploding like nothing ever has, creating all kinds of networks of commerce and bringing people close together in new and unusual ways. We have to figure out how to make this work for us. If it doesn't work for us, it will work against us.

I believe leaving our trade relations on hold with the fastest growing economies in the world will not create a single job in America, and it certainly won't raise environmental standards or labor standards in other countries. This year -- this year alone, so far, two-thirds of the increase in America's trade has come from Canada to the southern tip of South America, our neighbors -- two-thirds. We could do better. This year, leaders from Europe have gone to South America to tell them that the United States no longer cares about their markets or the cooperation and leadership that goes along with working with them. They say that their future should be with Europe, and they should organize to give Europe considerations and breaks in opening their markets and leave us out.

Now, think about it. Think about Chile or Brazil or Argentina. Their markets are more closed to us than ours are to them. We still are selling more just because they're growing so much. But we know they'll grow a lot more over the next 10 to 20 years. They now need things that we sell and things that your people produce better than any other group of people in the world.

This is not about NAFTA or factories moving there to sell back to here. I think all of us agree it is highly unlikely anyone will move a factory to Chile to sell back to here. This is about how we can best seize our opportunities in the economy that is emerging and how 4 percent of the world's people can continue to maintain 20 to 22 percent of the world's wealth and continue to grow the economy so incomes can rise and new jobs can be created.

Now, I know this is a difficult debate, and I know we disagree about it. But the debate over fair trade and fast track should itself be fair. It should also be open and honest. I have personally sat alone in the White House and listened to talk shows where your representatives were on the shows, because I wanted to hear the arguments and hear the concerns and know the things that you want. And you know we have had exhaustive numbers of meetings between the administration

and leaders of the labor movement. We ought to have an open, fair, and honest debate. We are trying to move as much as we can on a lot of the concerns that you have raised.

But I also want to say that I think we share too many values and priorities to let this disagreement damage our partnership. You just think of all of the things that I reeled off that we've done together and all of the things we've stood against in the last 5 years. I have worked to make this economy work for middle-class Americans. I care about making sure everybody has a chance and making sure nobody is left behind. But I can't build a better future without the tools to do the job, and America can't lead if it's bringing up the rear.

At the moment of our greatest economic success in an entire generation, we shouldn't be reluctant about the future. We ought to seize it and shape it. And I think I also have to say to you that there are a lot of good Members of Congress who agree with me about our trade policy who also stood for the minimum wage. They agree with me about our trade policy, but they fought to provide health care for 5 million more kids. They support open trade, but they also fought to protect Medicare and Medicaid and education and the environment and to open the doors of college to all Americans.

And when the majority in Congress wanted to do so, they stood against them and fought with you against the contract on America. They fought with you against attempts to repeal the prevailing wage laws, to weaken unions and workplace health and safety laws. They did so in the face of intense pressure. They have fought for you and for all working people, and they deserve our support. If they were to lose their positions because they stood up for what they believe was right for America's future, who would replace them and how much harder would it be to get the necessary votes in Congress to back the President when he stands by you against the majority?

America is far better off when the friends of working people stand together without letting one issue trump all the others. Friends and allies don't participate in the politics of abandonment. They band together, disagreeing when they must but banding together.

I pledge to do that, and hope you will, too. We've got a lot to do in education, in making sure Medicare and Social Security are there for the next generation of parents, in bridging the divide of race and all of the differences that are now taking place in this country. That's an area where you've always been out front, and I want to close with that, because you can help, perhaps more than almost any other group in America, to bridge the divides and to preserve the bonds of community.

When I leave you, I'm going home to Arkansas, and tomorrow I will try to focus our Nation on a haunting but hopeful moment in our country's struggle to make America the Nation live up to America the idea -- a day, 40 years ago, when nine brave African-American boys and girls, shielded from a hateful crowd by United States Army paratroopers, walked through the doors of Little Rock Central High School for the first time. I will honor the courage and vision of those whose eyes were fixed on the prize of equal educational opportunity without regard to race.

There are still a lot of doors we have to open. There are still some doors we have to open wider. And now, unfortunately, there are some doors we've got to work hard from being shut again. There is also a new reality we're all going to have to come to grips with that very few Americans have thought about. It will change the workplace. It will change communities. It will change the way we do our business as citizens. That reality is that we are not simply a black-white nation; we are not simply a black-Hispanic-Native-American-white nation. Instead, we are a nation now of nearly all the peoples of the world, with greater diversity in how we work and live together and greater integration in how we work and live together than virtually any other democracy on Earth. And within the ranks of Caucasians and blacks and Latinos and Asians, there is increasing ethnic and cultural diversity.

As we become the most diverse democracy on Earth -- and make no mistake about it, we are becoming that -- today, only Hawaii has no majority race. Within a decade, probably within 4 or 5

years, California, our largest State with 13 percent of our population, will have no majority race. And sometime before the next century is half done, America will have no majority race. Are we going to embrace this? Are we going to say that we celebrate our diversity, but we're united by something more important? Or are we going to let it get away from us and drift off into little enclaves and weaken our country and our future and our children's future? You're in a unique position to help.

Labor has a tradition here, established by visionaries like A. Philip Randolph and Walter Reuther. Labor has helped generations of African-Americans and new immigrants to gain dignity and respect. Your members reached across racial and ethnic lines to fight for a common future and personal dignity. Few institutions in America can claim anything like the record of the labor movement in fighting for equal opportunity.

It was for that reason and for her own merit that I appointed your executive vice president, Linda Chavez-Thompson, a member of my race advisory commission. She has seen discrimination firsthand. She knows discrimination is not a thing of the past, but she is determined to see that it has no place in our future. I am grateful for her help, and I ask you for yours.

A century ago, the working men and women of labor imagined an America where older people had health security, where African-Americans enjoyed equal protection under the law, where working people had the right to organize and fight for a better life. Because they imagined it and because they worked for it, it's the America we're living in today.

Now it is up to us to imagine the America of the 21st century. And on every issue I discussed today, that is all I ask you to do. Imagine it, based on what we now know. Imagine an America in which every child has a world-class education, in which every family can fairly balance the demands of work and childrearing, in which we lift living standards here and around the world, in which we learn to grow our economy and preserve the common environment which is our home, in which our oldest values of opportunity, responsibility and community guide us into a new time of greatest opportunity.

As American working men and women have shown time and time again, if we imagine it and we work at it, we will build it, an America for our children, always eager for tomorrow. You have brought new energy to the labor movement. You have brought new energy to America. Let us work to build that into a future we can be proud of.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Convention Hall at the David Lawrence Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to John J. Sweeney, president, Richard Trumka, secretary general, and Linda Chavez-Thompson, vice president, AFL-CIO; Sandra Feldman, president, American Federation of Teachers; and Arturo Rodriguez, president, United Farm Workers of America.

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Public Papers of the Presidents

April 26, 1996

CITE: 32 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 714**LENGTH:** 1892 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks to the Service Employees International **Union** Convention**BODY:***April 24, 1996*

Thank you for that wonderful welcome, and thank you, Dick, for that fine introduction. I really enjoyed working with you, and I want to congratulate you on the many years of service you have given to your great **union**. I look forward to working with your new president, Andy Stern. I know he has also made a tremendous contribution as your organizing director, and I wish him every success.

I want to also acknowledge your secretary-treasurer, Betty Bednarczyk, and my wonderful Secretary of Labor Bob Reich. I know that you enjoyed his speech, and I thank him for his work on your behalf.

And finally, let me thank SEIU for one of its greatest gifts to America, John Sweeney. Because of John's leadership, and because of your commitment, labor is back. I know in this political season, some people aren't too happy about that, I am delighted.

I am proud that in 1996 the voice of **organized labor**, the voice of working men and women from all across our country, will be heard in our national debate. I welcome your voice. America needs to hear it. And I promise you this: You will be heard.

You know, in a way, it's hard to believe that SEIU is celebrating its 75th anniversary, for you stand out as America's most dynamic and innovative **union**, a shining example of labor's revival. Not only has SEIU given renewed hope for millions of **union** members, you've also pioneered new ways to organize both workers in low-wage industries and workers in fast-growing industries like health care.

Of course, we all know your contributions to America stretch far beyond collective bargaining. From civil rights and family and medical leave to the minimum wage and the fight to save Medicare and Medicaid, SEIU has been a leader in the struggle to achieve economic and social progress for all Americans.

In many ways, we're on a shared mission. Four years ago our economy was drifting with high unemployment, a deficit twice as high as it is now, and very few new jobs. I took office determined to change our course, to cut the deficit in half in 4 years, to invest in education and training, to shrink and reform the Government so that it works better and costs less. Our Government is now the smallest it's been since 1965, but it's still strong enough to protect workplace safety, pure food, clean air and water, to help Americans to get the education and training they need, to help grow the economy and to protect our seniors through Medicare. And I'm proud of that strength. You helped to get it there, and you helped to keep it there, and I thank you very much.

In 1992, I told the American people that if we carried out our economic plan, two things would happen, we'd get 8 million new jobs and the deficit would be cut in half. Well, just a couple of weeks ago, we learned that our economy has already created 8.5 million new jobs, nearly all of

them in the private sector. And last month the Congressional Budget Office said that by the end of this year the deficit will be less than half of what it was when I took office. Over 8 million new jobs, the deficit cut in half.

Those are two important commitments you helped me keep to the American people. We also have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years. Our auto and telecommunications industries are now leading the world again. We have a 15-year high in homeownership, and we have finally halted the decade-long slide in real hourly earnings.

But let's face it, we all know this is a record to be proud of, but to build on, not to sit on. Too many Americans still are working harder just to hold on. We have to do more. We have to continue to focus on the concerns of working Americans, the concerns they have about their own families' economic security at a time when the country is undergoing profound economic transformation, a transformation every bit as momentous as the shift from farms to factories a century ago.

As I said in the State of the **Union**, one of the main challenges we face is to make sure that this new economy with all of its opportunity doesn't leave behind people who are willing to work for their own opportunities. We need to make sure that every American can be a winner in this time of economic change, to make sure that every American has access to education and training and good health care and secure pensions. And we absolutely have to get wages rising again in our country. We have got to do that for working people and working families.

That's why I fought for the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act. That's why we have dramatically expanded the earned-income tax credit, to give tax cuts to more than 15 million working families with incomes under \$ 28,000. That's why just after I took office I swept away my predecessor's anti-worker, anti-**union** Executive orders. And that's why, with an Executive order of our own last spring, this administration said in no uncertain terms we will not allow companies who replace striking workers permanently to do business with our Government. I also want you to know that I directed the Justice Department to take all appropriate steps to overturn a recent court decision blocking that Executive order.

Now unfortunately, for the past year you and I have been trying to work with a Congress that didn't always see eye to eye with us when it came to putting in place an agenda that would make the American dream accessible to all Americans. I'm proud to say that in these battles we've had with Congress we've more than held our own. Not only have we managed to stall or defeat practically every major attack on America's working families and on the **unions** that represent them, we may be poised on the verge of major victories.

I challenged Congress to pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill, which would improve access to health care for 43 million Americans, so that you don't lose your health care when you change jobs, and you can't be denied coverage if someone in your family has been sick. Now Congress is finally moving forward with that important legislation. Yesterday it passed the Senate 100 to zero. That's the kind of thing we all ought to be doing more of for the American people.

And I want to challenge the Senate and the House to get together and pass a good version, a clean version of that bill. Pass something that can pass 100-0 again in the Senate and 435-0 in the House. And when it does, that bill will be law the minute it hits my desk.

I challenge the Congress to raise the minimum wage, which is on the verge of hitting a 40-year low. Now, you and I know that no one can raise a family on \$ 4.25 an hour. So if we're going to talk about family values in Washington, we ought to reinforce them in the heartland of America. Last year, I proposed that Congress increase the minimum wage to \$ 5.15 an hour. For a parent working full time, this 90-cent-an-hour increase would help pay for groceries for 7 months, for 4 months of rent or months of child care. Raising the minimum wage will help many of our hardest working people. Six out of 10 of them are working women, many trying to raise children and hold their families together.

I'll say again: If we're going to have family values coming out of Washington, we should start by valuing families that are working hard, staying off welfare, doing their best to raise thier children. They're living by the values we say we all believe in, and it's harder for them than it is for most of the rest of us. I say it's time to give them a hand up; they don't want a handout, just a hand up.

Now Congress appears, at last, to be moving forward with a bill that would raise the minimum wage. They should do it, and they should do it without gimmicks. That's another bill I want to be the law of the land now. And I want to say a special word of thanks again to my friend John Sweeney for his hard work on this. The dignity of America's working people should be above reproach. If you work full time and you have children in your home, you should not live in poverty. We can afford this, and there's all the evidence in the world it will not cost us jobs.

Let me say next, I hope Congress will start moving right now on my "Retirement Saving and Security Act," which would expand coverage to help 51 million working Americans who are not now covered by an employer provided retirement plan. The bill would also increase portability so workers can take their retirement savings with them and keep saving if they change jobs or lose their jobs.

And finally, I urge Congress to come back to the table and work with me to pass the right kind of 7-year balanced budget. Now in all those hours of negotiations over the winter, congressional leaders and I have come up with plans that have in common more than enough savings to balance the budget, provide tax relief for working families, and protect our values by protecting Medicare and Medicaid and our investments in education and in the protection of our environment.

We can make this a season of progress. We can get back to work and balance the budget in the right way, so we can bring interest rates down again, make homeownership more affordable, get investment in the economy and grow jobs, and still protect the things we believe in that keep us coming together as a country.

But make no mistake: I will not stand for a budget that jeopardizes these bedrock commitments to Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment. And I will not accept legislation like the T-Max, which would repeal the ban against company **unions**, or legislation that weakens OSHA. We can't afford to jeopardize the future of working Americans by undermining the safety and the solidarity of the workplace, and if such legislation crosses my desk, I'll do what the Constitution entitles me to do: I'll veto it.

You and your families and the millions and millions of working families just like you, you're the heart and soul of the American dream. We have to keep working together, not just to preserve what's been won, but to continue to fight for better jobs, stronger **unions**, higher wages, more justice, for things that will bring us together.

I honestly believe the 21st century can be the next American Century. Our children and our grandchildren can enjoy more freedom and more opportunity than any generation of Americans, if we do the right thing. If we stand up to those who would take this country backward, if we stand up for the men and women who work hard every day to build our country, we can realize the promise of this great Nation.

You know, there is a lot of talk in Washington about empowerment. Sometimes people in the other party mean giving people more choice but not caring much about whether they can exercise the choice. Well, we want empowerment, too. We want to make sure every person, every family, every community, has what it takes to make the most of their own lives and live up to their dreams. With your help, we will realize that goal.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 12 noon from Suite 520 of Media Technologies to the convention meeting in Chicago, IL. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Cordtz, interim

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

October 23, 1995

CITE: 31 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1918**LENGTH:** 6098 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks to the **AFL -- CIO** Convention in New York City**BODY:**

The President. Thank you very much for the wonderful welcome. Thank you, Tom, for the great introduction. I wish I'd been here to hear it. *[Laughter]* But I appreciate it.

You know, I've taken so many controversial positions in the last 3 years, I thought I'd come here and tell you what you ought to do in this election. *[Laughter]* You should elect -- listen to this -- you ought to elect an Irish-American from the Bronx who comes out of the Service Employees Union. *[Laughter]* I just want you to know that whatever you do, I intend to be there with you every step of the way. And I know how important this is. *[Applause]* Thank you.

Let me say before I get into my remarks, I have just come, as I think all of you know, from Hyde Park and a meeting with President Yeltsin of Russia. We made a lot of progress today in agreeing to work toward peace in Bosnia, something that concerns every citizen of the world whose conscience has been shocked by all the children and other innocent people who have been killed there.

We also agreed on working together, very importantly, to control the spread of nuclear materials, something that is a very serious problem in the aftermath of the cold war, to minimize the prospect that terrorists will ever be able to get small amounts of nuclear material and make bombs out of them.

And finally, President Yeltsin agreed with me that we should go for the strongest possible comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty next year. And that means we will probably get it, and the world will be much safer as a result of it.

I know that you have -- all of you -- and I came here more than anything else just to thank you, because I know that you have waged a strong and passionate grassroots campaign for a year now to oppose the cuts in worker safety and job training, in education and health care, being considered in the Congress. The White House mailroom is jammed with postcards from union retirees. *[Applause]* Thank you. This may be the high-tech age, but you have got the Capitol Hill switchboards groaning with calls from your members. And I say, send more. And I know that those ads you're running have gotten some Members of Congress suffering with heartburn. And we just need to pour it on a little more. I thank you for that.

I come here today with a simple message: This is a very great country. You helped to make it that way. We're on the edge of a new century. We're living in a time of great change. No one can perceive clearly all the implications of that change.

We know that we've moved from an industrial age to an information and technology age, which, as all of you know in your own experience, even industry and agriculture is infused today with more technology. We know we have moved from the bipolar world of the cold war to a global village in which we have dreamed of new possibilities but also a lot of new vulnerabilities because of the changes that are going on.

And we know we've got to somehow harness this change to benefit ordinary people in our country

and throughout the world. We have to do it consistent with the basic values that made America great and that make life worth living, values that your movement embodies: a commitment to opportunity for every American; to the dignity of work; to the commitment that the family should be strengthened and children should be nurtured and parents should be honored; a recognition that we have to go forward or backward together and therefore it is crazy for us to be divided by race, by region, by income and any way that in any way saps our strength; and the determination to keep this country the strongest nation on Earth. Those are the things which have animated the labor movement in the later half of the 20th century. And those are the values that will take us into the 21st century.

Three years ago, you helped the American people to send me to Washington to uphold these values and to turn our economy around. I had a commitment to make the American dream real for all Americans in the 21st century and to make sure that our country would remain the strongest country in the world. I had a simple strategy to harness change to benefit all of us. I thought we needed to be faithful to the mainstream values I just mentioned. I thought we needed a middle class economic strategy to grow the middle class and shrink the under class. I thought we needed a modern Government that would be less bureaucratic, more entrepreneurial, but still strong enough to take care of the business that the people need done.

The lion's share of the credit belongs to you and the rest of the American people, but we're moving in the right direction. And I know that our policies had something to do with it. We've got 7 1/2 million new jobs in this country, after the slowest job growth in the country since the Great Depression, in the 4 years before I took office. We've got 2 1/2 million more homeowners, 2 million new small business people, the lowest combined rate of inflation and unemployment in 25 years. Our country is safer and stronger. For the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there's not a single solitary nuclear missile pointed at the people of the United States of America. And I'm proud of that. And by the grace of God, from Northern Ireland to Haiti, to the Middle East, now to Bosnia, the United States is a strong partner in pushing for peace.

Maybe most important of all, this country seems to be slowly coming together around its values again. It's hard to turn a great country around, but when we get going in a certain direction, we can make a real difference. In almost every State, in this great city where you're meeting, the crime rate is down; the murder rate is down; the welfare rolls are down; the food stamp rolls are down. Believe it or not, the poverty rate is down, and the teen pregnancy rate has dropped for 2 years in a row. America is coming back and moving together.

And we proved you could do it together. Instead of just condemning the Government the way my predecessors did, we made a partnership with the Federal employees, and in a balanced and fair and disciplined way, we tried to downsize the Government so that this big Government attack is a myth today. But we left our Government strong enough for the employees that are there to do their jobs. And we just didn't throw anybody on the street; we gave them good buyout provisions. We tried to protect their retirement. We treated them and their families with decency and the honor and the respect they were entitled to after the years they had served the United States of America. And that's the way this ought to be done everywhere.

Let me tell you what the Federal employees are doing -- just a few things. I could talk all day about it. But Federal employees working in the Commerce Department, in the Export-Import Bank, in other areas, have helped to create good jobs, many of them union jobs, in America by increasing our exports 4 percent, 10 percent, and 16 percent this year, in the last 3 years. A lot of that was done because of aggressive actions by people who work for the United States Government.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency -- we've had as many natural disasters to deal with in the last 3 years as any time I can remember. And it is probably the most popular arm of the Federal Government because the Federal employees have been there in a timely, aggressive, effective fashion when they were needed, whether it was for floods in the Middle West or fires and earthquakes in the West or anything else. And I am proud of that.

And let me tell you something I'm especially proud of. Business Week magazine, which is hardly an arm of the Federal Government or the Democratic Party, every year gives awards to businesses that perform at the highest level of efficiency in a number of categories. And one of their categories is for customer service over the telephone. So the businesses that compete, for example, are Southwest Airlines or L. L. Bean or, you know, anybody that you call on the telephone. You know who won this year? The Social Security Administration of the Federal Government won that award.

These Federal employees operate a Medicare program that has a 2 percent administrative cost, lower than any private insurance program in the United States of America, something you rarely hear about in the debate going on in Congress today. They have implemented a crime bill that's putting 100,000 police on the streets of America, and they're doing it on time and under budget. They have implemented the motor voter law, the family leave law, both those things that you helped to get.

They have been able to be much tougher in capturing large quantities of drugs before they come into this country. Without going into a bunch of immigrant bashing, they have been able to in a disciplined way strengthen our ability to reduce the problems of illegal immigration in the United States. And they have fought discrimination, something that was out of fashion for the Federal Government to do until this administration came in. And I thank them for it.

And guess what? We've been able to prove you can grow the economy and be decent to working people, something that the people who were there before and the people who are in the Congress today in dominant positions apparently don't believe. If you look at what's happened -- and I'm sure Tom mentioned a lot of this -- but when we repealed my predecessors' anti-union Executive orders that denied American workers their rights from private industry to public service, it didn't hurt the economy. The economy got better, not worse. When we said in no uncertain terms that you ought to have a fair, decent, effective NLRB, and we did our best to provide that, the economy got better, not worse. It didn't undermine the American economy.

When we refused to go along with repealing Davis-Bacon and the service contract law, the economy didn't collapse; it helped to create more high-wage jobs, not fewer. And when we began to crack down on sweatshops where unscrupulous employers make illegal immigrants work in prison-like conditions, depriving them of the minimum wage, overtime pay, a safe workplace and the right to organize, it will make us stronger, not weaker.

And when we have refused to go along with the attempts of some people to weaken our ability to provide a safe workplace, it has not weakened the economy; it has helped to make the American economy stronger. It is time we accepted a fundamental lesson: Treating working people in a decent, fair, humane, enlightened way gives you a stronger American economy, not a weaker one.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you.

Now, we do have some real challenges before us. You and I know that this recovery's benefits have not been spread evenly to all Americans. We know that we've been in a time of increasing inequality. By the way, this is what usually happens when you move from one economic model to another. When we move from the agricultural age to the industrial age, the labor movement grew up because there were so many people who were being exploited, not benefiting from the benefits of the new industrial age. So whenever you change in a huge way the way people work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world, some will be well-positioned and do well; others will not be.

That's why people need to come together, because you know in the end you cannot sustain progress unless everybody can benefit. That's one of the big reasons we had the Great Depression,

because people did not understand that everybody had to have a stake in the future in order for free enterprise to flourish.

And so we have that happening today, where people who are well-positioned tend to do well; others work harder for less and become more insecure. There are some fundamental things we have to do about it. First and most elementally, it is high time we raise the minimum wage. It is wrong -- *[applause]*. Thank you. If we do not do that, next year the minimum wage will reach a 40-year low in purchasing power. That is not my idea of the 21st century America I want our children and grandchildren to live in. I want us to go up together.

It also will be good business. People will have more money to consume, and people who are presently out of the work force will be attracted to get back into it. There is no evidence, no evidence, and I have read all the studies -- at least I've read fair summaries of all the studies. I don't want to -- *[laughter]* -- there is no evidence that the minimum wage, a modest increase in the minimum wage, will cause unemployment. There is every evidence that it will strengthen America and bring us together.

The second thing I think we need to do is to make some changes that recognize that there is a fundamental difference in the nature of unemployment today and unemployment 30 years ago. The unemployment compensation system, the whole setup was designed for people who were laid off when there was a slowdown and then picked right back up by their employers when the economy picked up again. It was designed to give people a way to just get by until they got called back.

As recently as 30 years ago, 80 percent -- 85 percent of the people who were laid off and collected unemployment were called back to the same job from which they were laid off. Today, over 80 percent of the people who are laid off are not called back to the same job from which they are laid off. All of you know that. Therefore, I have proposed having the Labor Department, working with the Education Department, create a "GI bill for America's workers," which consolidates all of our training programs, puts more money into it, and gives every person who loses a job a right to get a voucher to take to the program that you want, whether it's a union apprenticeship program, a union training program, the local community college. Whatever is best needed for the people that are unemployed, they ought to have it. And I think we ought to do it immediately.

The second thing that we ought to do -- if we're going to have a tax cut we ought to target it to working families and what they need the most, which is help raising their children, paying for their child care, and getting an education. So I think we ought to have a tax deduction for the cost of all education after high school. Now, that would help working people a lot. That would help.

The third thing I will say is -- and I know we have sometimes disagreed on this -- I believe that we win when we expand trade. So it's not enough to have more free trade, which I favor, we also have to have more fair trade. That's what the Japanese auto agreement was about. And thank you, Owen Bieber, for supporting us and for finally giving us a chance to crack some of those markets that have been denied American workers for too long. And we're going to keep doing things like that all the way down.

Against that background, this is how I think you ought to see this balanced budget fight. What has worked for us the last 2 1/2 years? Mainstream values, work and family and responsibility and community and treating people with dignity, all people, without regard to their race or their region or income; believing that you have to lift working people up if you want other people to do well: That has worked for us. What's Worked for us? Middle class economics, help the small business people, help the entrepreneurs, also help to grow the middle class working people and shrink the under class: That's what works. That's what is at stake in this budget battle.

This is not -- I want to say this, and I want you to go home and tell everybody you know this -- this is not a battle about balancing the budget. That has nothing to do with what is going on in Washington today. I gave the Congress a balanced budget. You'd be better off if we could balance

the budget. When we quadrupled the debt in 12 years before I showed up, what happened? We had to spend more and more money on interest on the debt. We had less and less money to invest in worker training, in new technology, and the kinds of things that will grow the economy, raise incomes, educate our children.

It would be a good thing to do. But we have to do that, like everything else, consistent with our values and our objectives. That is what is at stake. It is, what kind of America are we going to live in?

I've given the Congress a balanced budget. It cuts all kinds of spending. It eliminates hundreds of programs. But it increases our investment in education, in technology, in research. It protects instead of hurts the old, the poor, the disabled, the little children on Medicare and Medicaid. It supports investment in worker safety and in a clean environment and in the kinds of national treasures that we share together. That is the kind of balanced budget we need.

And that is what I want to talk to you about. I am not about to do something that I think will prevent us from doing what I ran for President to do: giving every American a shot at the American dream and making sure this is the strongest, finest country in the world in the 21st century. I am not going to do that. And you shouldn't put up with it. You shouldn't put up with it.

Now, here's what I mean. I'm going to give you the 10 greatest hits or so of this present budget. This is not the Letterman show, and so it won't all be funny. You may have to laugh a couple of times to keep from crying, but here's what this is really about. Here's what the real contract is.

We all say we believe in honoring our parents for what they have done for us. And Medicare is a way of honoring our parents. We have to slow the rate of growth of medical inflation. We have to secure the Medicare Trust Fund. I presented a budget which will do that.

We have to recognize that health care is changing. I have no problem with giving seniors the option to join managed care plans if they can get lower costs or better services. I think we should do that. I'm sympathetic with doctors and hospitals and their need to have some changes in the law so they can work together to compete with insurance companies to provide managed care. I'm not against that. But I'll tell you what I am against. I'm against this budget that was passed that, believe it or not, makes it easier to commit waste, fraud, and abuse. When the Federal Government says up to 10 percent of the money may be wasted, they passed a budget to make it easier to commit waste, fraud, and abuse but harder for the poorest, the oldest, and the sickest seniors to make sure their health care needs are met. That is wrong. I don't like it. I won't support it. And if it passes, I will veto it. It is wrong.

I want to talk to you about the Medicaid program. There's a lot of AFSME workers here who work in health care institutions that depend upon Medicaid. New York City has a whole health care network that depends not just on Medicare but Medicaid. Most people think Medicaid is the welfare health program. Let me tell you -- 70 percent of the Medicaid money goes to the elderly and the disabled for nursing home care, for in-home care, for physician care. Thirty percent of the Medicaid money does go to poor people, not all of them on welfare, some of them even working for very poor wages. And most of that money goes to take care of the little children. Over one in five children in the United States of America is eligible for Medicaid help for health care. And all those kids, they may not be in your family, but they're your kids. And 20 years from now, they're either going to be in jail or in school or in the work-place. And they're going to be a big part of our future. And I don't I about you, but when I retire, I want them out there working, making lots of money, taking care of me. And I want to take care of their health right now.

So my idea of the 21st century is not a Medicaid program that takes away the money that helps the poorest seniors to pay their part of the Medicare program. That's right; they get rid of it, \$ 10 billion. We help the poorest old folks pay their copays. We help them pay the fees they owe under Medicare because they don't have any money. There's a lot of old folks out there. There's folks still living on \$ 300 a month. This budget takes it all away. And there's been a study which estimates

that it may take at least a million elderly people out of the Medicare program.

I was in Texas the other night at a fund-raiser, and a doctor came up to me. A doctor came up to me, and he said, "You keep fighting on this." He said, "I've been a doctor a long time. I remember when I did not have any older patients, before Medicare, before Medicaid, when I had no older patients, because older people were too proud to come to the doctor if they couldn't pay their bills. So a lot of them just stayed home and got sick and died." It is wrong. I will not put up with it. It is not right. And you shouldn't put up with it either. It is not right. It is not right.

I want to tell you one more thing about this Medicaid plan. It says, "Oh, we're going to block-grant this to the States. We're going to get these terrible Federal rules and regulations out of the State's hair." I was a Governor for 12 years. I used to sing that song. *[Laughter]* I believe in that.

Our administration -- don't you let anybody tell you this is about State's rights -- our administration has given more waivers, more freedom to get out from under Federal rules to State governments to experiment with moving people from welfare to work or serving more people, getting health insurance to more people, than the last two administrations combined. More in 2 1/2 years than they did in 12 years. This is not about giving the States flexibility.

But let me tell you the kind of things they want to let the States do and what they don't want to let the States do, and it will tell you what's really behind this. They've adopted their Medicaid programs. And among other things, they say that the State ought to get Medicaid block-granted and they ought to have the right to get rid of the so-called spousal impoverishment rule. That's Government language. You know what that means? That means if an elderly couple lived to be 78 years old and they've been married 50 years and they're living on their Social Security and one of them gets so sick that he or she needs to go in the nursing home, they want to give back to the State governments the right to tell the one that doesn't go to the nursing home, "You want your wife or your husband to get any help? You've got to sell your car, sell your house, clean out your bank account, give it to us, and then we'll give you a little help. We don't know how you're going to live." I don't like that. That is not my idea of the 21st century I want to live in.

But you know what? In the next breath, do you know what they did? They took away from the States -- they say, "We're going to give you lots of flexibility and a little less money. And we want you to run it however you want to, but, oh, oh, there's one thing you've been doing we're not going to let you do anymore. Right now you can bargain with the drug companies to get the lowest possible price for drugs for elderly people and little kids. And we're not going to let you do that anymore, because the drug companies don't want us to. So I'm sorry, you will have to do more with less money, but here's something you can't do." I don't know about you, but I don't get driving up the price of drugs and driving old folks into the poor house. I don't think that's right. That's not the America I want to live in. And I'm going to do everything I can to stop it. And I want you to help me.

Now, I want to talk to you about education. Everybody's for education. You ask anybody in the Congress, are you for education? They say, absolutely. But you've always got to ask the next question; the first question is never enough. I'll tell you -- you know the best story I know about that -- you know, there's a -- this minister was sort of a -- not a very effective minister, and people would go to sleep in his sermons. And he was overcome, and he prayed day-in and day-out for inspiration so he could finally give a barn-burning sermon and everybody would stand up. And their hearts would be purified, and their spiritual zeal would be great.

So he worked so hard on this. And he showed up, and he gave the sermon of his life. And people were stomping and clapping and even in this staid church were shouting amen. And he got to the final line of his sermon; he said, "I want everybody that wants to go to heaven to stand up." And the whole congregation stood up, except one woman that hadn't missed church in 45 years. And he was crestfallen. He said, "Sister Jones, don't you want to go to heaven when you die?" And she leapt up, she said, "I'm sorry, I thought you were trying to get up a load to go right now." *[Laughter]*

So you always got to ask the next question. Everybody's for education. Our budget balances the budget and increases our investment in education by \$ 40 billion -- by \$ 40 billion over 7 years -- by making choices and setting priorities. Why? Because if 22 percent of the kids in this country are poor enough to be on Medicaid, they need a little extra help through Head Start to get off to a good start in school, because a lot of schools are too poor to have the class sizes they need or the computers we want them to have; because a lot of kids are in danger going to and from school, and we need to give schools more help to remain safe and drug-free; because we want to make it possible for everybody to go to college.

When I ran for President, I came here and I made a specific commitment. I said if you will vote for me and get me elected, I'll do everything I can to cut the cost of college loans, to improve the repayment on college loans, and then to be tougher on people who default. We cut the default rate in half, but we also cut the cost of college loans. We made repayment easier. And to boot, we added more scholarships.

And enrollment is going up, but nowhere near what we need. I want every middle class family in this country and every poor family in this country to be able to send their kids to college. And I don't want anybody ever from now on to have to walk away from a college education because of the cost. That's my idea of the 21st century.

So when the Congress presents a budget that says, no, it's all right if several thousand more kids -- 20, 30, whatever it is -- more kids don't get to go to Head Start and we have to remove them; it's all right if we don't help as many schools with safe and drug-free programs as we were; it's all right if a whole lot of schools now can't use that money for their poor kids for the smaller classes and the computers; it's okay if because the people that lost money on the direct loan program, the special interests, want their money back, so we're just going to kill this program that the Government's running that's got lower cost college loans and better repayment terms. We're going to get rid of that, and to boot, we'll get rid of somewhere between 150,000 and 380,000 scholarships. I don't know about you folks, that is not the kind of America I want for the 21st century. And I'm going to do everything I can to stop it. It is wrong. And it's bad for our economy. It doesn't make sense.

And we're getting a little closer to home now. You say to people, are you for family values? Why, of course we are. Who could be against it? Most of those who were there last time -- they're in the majority now -- when we asked them to stand up for family values by adopting the family and medical leave law, they said no. And we said yes. And there are families that are stronger today because of the family and medical leave law because they don't lose their jobs when there's a kid sick or a parent dying or one of them get sick. It's a better country. It's a stronger country. And it's a stronger economy because of that.

So what do we mean? Well, family values to me means safe streets, a clean environment, economic opportunity, fair taxes, secure pensions; let's just start there. Well, at least one House of Congress wants to eliminate our program to put 100,000 police on the street and to give communities -- the only block grant they don't like is the one we passed to give communities the power to do what they can to prevent crime, to give our children something to say yes to instead of something to say no to, the one all the mayors love, all the Governors love, everybody thinks is great -- they don't like that. Well, making us less safe is not my idea of family values.

Then they want to put 315 of our national parks and other national facilities up for sale, including Franklin Roosevelt's home where I was today. I know you find some of this unbelievable, but it's true. That's on the list. They have proposed to do all kinds of things to make it harder to preserve clean air, clean water, safe food. That's not my idea of family values. In economic opportunity, there's not a company in America that if they could avoid it in 1995 would cut research, technology, or training. But this budget cuts research, technology, and training. That's not my idea of how to build strong families. And worst of all, there's \$ 148 billion of hidden taxes and fees on working families while they propose to give people in my income group a tax cut. And that's not

my idea of the kind of 21st century I want to live in.

Now, I want you to listen to this. The Wall Street Journal, hardly an arm of the Democratic Party -- *[laughter]* -- reported the other day that if this budget passes with all of the taxes in it and all the tax cuts in it, with all the tax cuts in it the group of Americans as a group who make less than \$ 30,000 a year, which is 51 percent of the American people, will have greater tax hikes than tax cuts. I get a tax cut, and we're going to soak people like that?

You know, in 1993, one of the best things about our economic program was that we doubled the family tax credit, the earned-income tax credit, which had bipartisan support, signed into law by Gerald Ford, supported by Ronald Reagan, increased by George Bush, and we doubled it. Why? Because I wanted to be able to say to the American people, "Look, you got to choose work and family over welfare and dependence. And anybody who'll work 40 hours a week with children in the house -- I don't care how low their pay is -- we will not tax them into poverty. We will use the tax system to lift them out of poverty." That is the principle. That is the principle. And it's the right thing to do.

I mean, I thought the game plan was we were supposed to be growing the middle class and shrinking the under class. They want to cut this by more than I increased it. They want to kick people out of the middle class and then pull the ladder up so poor people can't work their way into it. You want to get more people on welfare? Raise taxes on people with two kids making \$ 11,000-\$ 12,000 a year, and they will say, no thank you. This does not make sense. It violates our values. It violates our interest. It is bad for the economy. It is wrong for America. And if I can stop it with a veto pen or with my voice or whatever it takes, I am going to do everything I can to stop it. And I want you to help me, too.

Audience members. Veto! Veto! Veto!

The President. This is the last issue I want you to focus on. These are great hits. I want you to remember this. I want you to go home, I want you to talk to friends in the workplace, and I want you to talk to friends who aren't in your union. I want you to talk to people at church, at the bowling alley, at the ballpark, wherever two or more are gathered. I want you to talk to people. I want people to know about this. This is their country, just like it's your country. This is not about me or the Republicans in Congress. It's about the future of the American family, the future of the American workplace, the future of the United States. And so I want you to listen to this. This is the greatest last hit.

During the 1980's, when -- you know, that "everything goes" decade where everything was going to trickle down to ordinary people -- thousands and thousands of corporations transferred some \$ 20 billion out of their employees' pension funds for buyouts and other purposes. An awful lot of workers lost their life savings. Last December, one of the proudest things I was able to do in the last Congress, even after the November election, the Congress passed a bill that saved 8 1/2 million American pensions and stabilized 40 million others that were in danger of being in trouble. I don't know what the retirement income of 48 1/2 million Americans is worth to the strength, the stability of America; to our pro-family, pro-work values; to our economic future, but I think it's worth an awful lot.

Now, as if we haven't learned anything from the eighties and didn't have to do that, this Republican budget would allow companies to withdraw money from their workers' pension funds to use it for whatever reason they want.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. For whatever reason they want. Corporate buyouts, bonuses, any reason.

Now, folks, we just had to fix this last year. You know, I don't remember as well as I used to; my circuits are kind of jammed. But I can at least remember what I did last year. *[Laughter]* That is

not my idea of what I want America to look like in the 21st century, taking good middle class people that worked hard all their lives, paid into their pension, showed up at work, did everything they were supposed to, and, "Oh, I'm sorry, your pension is gone." One of two things is going to happen: Either the Government will have to bail it out again, in which case the deficit reduction won't take place. Or we'll throw them into the street, and we'll one more time shrink the middle class and grow the under class. Say no to that. Say no to looting the pension funds. Say no. It's wrong. It's wrong.

And look, the thing that bothers me about this is that this budget would snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. This country is in better shape than it was 2 1/2 years ago. We're moving in the right direction. What we need to do is build on what we've done, not tear it down. We need to build on middle class economics. We need to build on an economy that has the largest number of new small businesses in history. We need to build on the best time for education in the last 30 years, in the last Congress. We need to build on medical reforms that are slowing the rate of medical inflation without stripping elderly people of the security and dignity of knowing that their health care is there. We do not need to tear it down. We need to prove we can make the environment and the economy go together, not walk away from our common responsibilities.

Folks, this is about more, even more, than all the things that we are concerned about that directly affect any of us individually. This is about what kind of country we're going to be. It's about whether we're going to live by the values we all say we believe in. It's about whether the American dream is going to be alive in the 21st century. And what we really have to do is to do what that sign says. If we'll just stand up for America's working families, if we'll just do what we know is right, if we'll use every tool at our command -- I will use the tools at my command, but I want you to go home, and I want you to talk to people in the streets and say we're moving this country. This country is going into the 21st century. Don't let these people take us back. If it takes a veto, you'll have it. But I need you in the streets standing up for America's future.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Donahue, president, AFL-CIO, and Owen Bieber, former president, United Auto Workers.

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Public Papers of the Presidents

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HEADLINE: Remarks to the National Conference of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL -- CIO

BODY:

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for that wonderful welcome. Thank you, Bob Georgine, for that fine introduction, all the distinguished affiliated presidents up here on the platform and all of you out there in the audience, and I thank those of you who brought your children. Since most of what we're doing and a lot of what I have to say is about them, I'm glad to see them here.

I forgive the person in the back who shouted, "UCLA." [*Laughter*] I told the Gridiron Dinner the other night at the Press Club -- I said, my worst nightmare was a final with Arkansas and UCLA. My worst nightmare, the team I love against a team with 54 electoral votes. [*Laughter*]

It was a great tournament, a great game. They won it fair and square, and I congratulate them.

You know, a lot of us here have a lot in common. Bob and I have something in common. We were both raised by strong mothers who believed in hard work and optimism and practiced what they preached and made sure that we practiced what they preached. It was our first lesson in **organized labor**. [*Laughter*]

I'm deeply honored to be here with you today. I want to thank you for the support that you have given to our programs to train America's workers for the future. I believe that good, strong **unions** and collective bargaining can help us to meet the challenges that are just ahead if all of us are willing to embrace those challenges and to do what has to be done to make sure that we compete and win in the global economy.

That's why one of the very first things I did as President was to rescind the anti-**union** Executive orders of the last 12 years, and why last month, I also signed an Executive order which bars Federal agencies from doing business with companies that hire permanent replacement workers.

I have been saying as I'm going around the country that we know what works in our own lives. What works in our own lives is when we are well-educated, well-trained, we work hard, and we work together. There is no future in this country in pitting management against labor. All of us are caught up now in a common destiny in the global economy. All of us will have more job security or more job insecurity, as the case may be, depending on how well we adapt to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

That is the way we have to look at this. We are going up or down together. And it is time we stop looking for ways to be divided, one from another, and start at looking harder for how we can resolve these divisions in an open and honest way so we can get about the business of building our future. That's what we ought to be doing in this country, and that's what I'm trying to do for you every day at the White House.

I look at the **unions** represented here, the carpenters, the painters, the bricklayers, the electricians, the others, you built our homes, our cities, our factories, the biggest industrial system in the world. You have built our country, and then you have had to rebuild our country. One of the

greatest wonders I have seen since I have been President is the swift handiwork of your members who rushed in after the natural disasters, from Florida to the Midwest to California. You did a very good job. And we now are doing a better job with our Emergency Management Agency to try to make sure we do our part and the money gets out there to rebuild places who are torn down through no fault of their own.

Many of you have become heroes to folks whose lives were devastated in those disasters, who wouldn't have a bridge to cross a river or roads to get them to work or offices to work in or roofs over their head if you hadn't worked hard to make sure that the American dream could be restored.

All through 1992 when I was out running for President, I met a lot of people who wondered about the state of the American dream, including construction workers, farmers, office workers, mothers and fathers. I talked with them and listened to them; I worked with them. I walked a picket line with them at the Caterpillar workers in Illinois. What I found was that most people felt that they were out there on their own, struggling against forces that were bigger than they were without anybody very much concerned about what was going to happen to them.

I ran for President because I felt strongly that the end of the cold war and the dawn of the information age gave us opportunities for peace and prosperity, gave our children opportunities to live out their dreams never before known in human history, but that we also had some very, very profound challenges that unless they were faced, the American dream for all of our people would be at risk.

I wanted to make sure that middle class Americans and their children were not forgotten. I wanted to make sure that poor people would have chance to work their way into the middle class. I wanted to make sure that we could keep alive opportunities for entrepreneurs to become wildly successful without forgetting that this country was built and this country will endure by the broad middle class and by the fact that they work hard, play by the rules, raise their children, and deserve to be rewarded for it, and must be rewarded for it if we're going to keep the American dream alive. That is why I ran for this job.

I also, very frankly, ran to challenge middle class America, because there are many things that Government cannot and should not do. The most important things in the world to us, our commitments, our values, our work, our family, our communities, by and large operate independent of the Government.

Today we're having a great debate here in Washington about what role our National Government should play and how far we can go in working together and moving together. Really, the debate has been going on for at least 15 years now, a debate that, frankly, I'm getting kind of tired of: an old debate that defends Government at every turn; a new debate that attacks Government at every turn; an old view that says we should spend more on everything; a new view that says we should spend less on everything; an old view that said we should do more of everything; a new view that says we should do less of everything. Both views defy our common experience, our common sense, and what we see about what's working, not only here in the United States but around the world.

What works is when the Government, in my judgment, focuses on four things: First of all, creating economic opportunity, jobs, working for better jobs and higher incomes, and demanding responsible behavior from citizens in return. I had an economic meeting in Atlanta last week, and Hugh McColl, from North Carolina, the chairman of NationsBank, pointed out that about that time, he said, "Tonight your basketball team and mine are going to have a basketball game. And the referee is going to throw the ball up, make sure the playing field is level, enforce the rules, and otherwise get out of the way. And that's about what the Government ought to do." But we have to make sure the playing field is level, that there are rules that are enforced, and we get out of the way.

The second thing that we have to pay attention to is the security of our people, our security from attack from abroad and our security from within. I'm proud of the fact that since I have been President, for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age there are no Russian missiles pointed at the children of the United States of America. I am proud of that. But I know and you know that our security is also threatened by crime and violence and drugs on our streets. And our security is also threatened by the things which are breaking our families apart and punishing people who are doing their best to do the right things.

That's why we worked so hard to pass that crime bill with 100,000 police on the streets and with prevention programs to give our kids something to say yes to and why we should not walk away from our commitment to putting 100,000 police on the street. Violent crime has tripled in the United States in the last 30 years; the police forces have expanded by 10 percent. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that we could lower the crime rate if we did what city after city after city is doing now and put more police on the block, working with kids, trying to prevent crime and catch criminals quicker. And we must not back away from that commitment to our security.

And there is another element to our security, too. It's what happens to families. Are we really going to reward work? Are we going to permit people to be successful workers and successful parents? Most places today, whether they're single-parent or two-parent households, all the parents are working. That's why I fought so hard for the Family and Medical Leave Act -- saw that as a question of family security -- why I want to see all the children in this country immunized; why in the economic plan last year we insisted that we give tax breaks for families with incomes just above the poverty line so we would not encourage anybody to slip back into welfare, and because nobody who works full-time and has children in the home should live in poverty in this country. If you work hard, you ought to be able to have a decent life.

The third thing we have to do is to reform the Government. We do have to change it. It ought to be smaller. It ought to be less bureaucratic. We ought to give more decisions back to the State and local government. We ought to give more decisions back to private citizens in their own lives. We ought to have Government that meets tomorrow's problems, not yesterday's.

That's why we've worked hard at deregulation and why we have given more responsibility to States in the area of welfare and health care reform than -- in 2 years -- than the last two administrations combined did in 12 years. We have been the administration that has pushed the decentralization of authority for solving a lot of our problems. And we've reduced the size of Government. There are over 100,000 fewer people working for the Federal Government today than there were on the day I became President.

And we have also decided that we have to solve some problems too long ignored. In a little-known action at the end of the last Congress, there was a reform in the United States pension systems which saved the pensions of 8 1/2 million working Americans who were in danger of losing their pensions and protected the pensions of over 30 million more. We still have work to do, and when we have to do it, we should do it well.

The fourth thing we have to do, and maybe the most important of all, is to help our people make the most of their own lives by making sure that everywhere -- everywhere -- we have a system of lifetime education and training that will permit people always to find work and always to compete and win in the global economy. That is what I think the job of Government is: create jobs, get better paying jobs, increase the security of the American people, make the Government smaller and less bureaucratic, but do the job that has to be done, and give people the skills they need to make the most of their own lives. That should be our road map.

If we could create opportunity and we can insist on more responsibility from the American people -- and I believe that strongly; that's what welfare reform is all about -- we'll help you if you're in trouble but not for a lifetime. You've got to go to work some time. I think that's what child support enforcement is all about. If you've got the money, you ought to be taking care of your kid, not asking the taxpayers to do it. That's what enforcing the student loan program is all about. I

increased the availability of student loans, but when I became President, it was costing you \$ 2.8 billion a year because people weren't paying the loans back. We've cut that down to a billion dollars a year. If people borrowed money from the Government to go to college, they ought to pay it back when they get a job so other kids can borrow the money when they come along.

I have called this new arrangement the New Covenant. What it means to me is simple: The Government should try to create more opportunity, but the citizens of this country are going to have to behave more responsibly in seizing it. And if you put the two together, there will be no stopping the United States.

Now, if you look at what's been accomplished in the last couple of years, I think the most important thing is that we have changed the direction of economic policy in this country. We went beyond the old debate. There's no more tax and spend, but there's not more trickle-down, either. This is invest and grow economics. And look at the results.

Two years ago when we were fighting for the economic plan, the people who were against it said the sky would fall. If the President's plan passes, the economy will be wrecked. Everything will be terrible. Some said I was cutting too much. Some said it was an error to raise taxes on the wealthiest Americans to put against the deficit because that would hurt the economy. Well, 2 years later, we have over 6 million new jobs and the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 25 years.

In reducing the deficit by \$ 600 billion, we took \$ 10,000 in debt off the future of every family in the United States. In cutting taxes for 15 million working families, this year, on average, families with two kids with an income of \$ 25,000 a year or less will pay about \$ 1,000 less in taxes than they would have if that economic plan hadn't passed. We made it possible for our country to say, "If you work 40 hours a week and you have a child in your home, you will not be in poverty." That is important, folks. If you want people to get off welfare, we have to reward work. And it's also why, by the way, we ought to raise the minimum wage, because people can't live on it.

And we didn't just spend more money on everything. We cut 300 programs, and the new budget I proposed cuts or consolidates 400 more.

We've also done what we could to help those of you in labor who have been taking responsibility all along. Last year, the AFL-CIO listed all the bills supported by **organized labor** that I signed into law. As of last fall, there were 32 of them, motor voter, family and medical leave, the assault weapons ban, to name just a few. Laws that increased our security as workers, parents, and citizens.

But you know, in spite of all this, there's still a lot more to do. I have people all the time come up to me in kind of bewilderment and say, "Well, things are going well in my business. Things are going well for our country. This country is in better shape than it was 2 years ago." Why are people still so negative about the future of the country? When you ask people what about the direction of the country, they say they are worried. I was interviewed by a magazine the other day saying their annual readers poll said that people understood that things were getting better, but the), were more worried about their personal security than ever before. Why is that?

Well, there's a reason for that. The global economy has imposed new challenges and new burdens on our country and every wealthy country in the world and runs the risk in our country of literally splitting apart the American idea. Let me explain what I mean by that.

From the time I was born at the end of World War II until the year I was elected Governor of my State for the first time, 1978, the American people moved forward in absolute lock-step. That is, if you break the economy into people who are in the lowest 20 percent and the second and so forth on to the top 20 percent, all of them had about the same increase in their incomes. Incomes roughly doubled in America from 1950 to 1978 evenly across the board, except the poorest 20 percent had an increase of 140 percent. So we were all going forward, and we were actually

coming together.

Since 1978 that's all changed. Wages have been stagnant and not kept up with inflation on average for hourly wage earners. And in the last 15 years, half of the American people are now living for the same or lower earnings that they were making 15 years ago when you adjust for inflation. Why? Because of the way the technology revolution and the global economy, where management and money and technology can fly across national borders, have divided opportunity, so that people with high levels of skill in growth industries tend to do well, and people with lower skill levels tend to get hurt. And then, if our Government walks away from its obligations to invest in our future, even more people get hurt.

The other thing that's happened is because the economy is changing so fast, even a lot of people that are doing well today think they're waiting for the other shoe to drop. So many big companies getting smaller all the time. You ought to read my mail about it. People my age, even young people I grew up with -- not so young anymore -- writing me, saying, "You know, I've worked for this company for 25 years. I've got to send my kids to college. We're doing great now, but what happens if they lay me off?."

So there is this uncertainty in our country today, even though we are clearly in better shape than we were 2 years ago. We've turned away from the false choice between tax and spend and trickle-down economics. We're moving in the right direction. The question is, how can we get everybody involved in the American dream? How can we reward everyone's work? How can we make people more secure in living with all these changes that are rifling through the world? That is the burden that I carry to the office every day, because I know -- I know that if everybody in this country had a chance to live their lives the way most of you have lived your lives and raised your kids, this country would be fine, and our future would be unlimited.

The key to the 21st century, more than anything else, is clearly, education for young people, lifetime job training for adults. It is clear that if we can raise the skill levels of our people, constantly and permanently, and continue to change the job mix so that we're always getting America's share of those highwage jobs, we can keep the America dream alive, and we can stop the middle class from splitting apart, so that everybody can grow and prosper. That is our great challenge. And that is the one we must not walk away from.

You have been working on this for years. You've had opportunities to train a new generation of builders. I want to especially commend the outreach programs that you've had with the Housing and Urban Development Department, reaching deep into our cities, taking thousands of young people from housing projects, teaching them the skills, and clearing away the obstacles to job opportunities. You have done some things that the Government could not do. And I thank you for that. I know that Bob really cares a lot about this outreach program because he spent his own early years in housing projects in Chicago. This is the kind of partnership we need more of.

For Government's part, we have to do more, as well. In 1994, the educational experts said that the United States Congress, in passing our education program, did more for education than had been done in Washington in 30 years. We expanded Head Start. We established the Goals 2000 program, which writes the national education goals into law but gives our local schools more flexibility in how they spend Federal money to achieve excellence. We dramatically increased the number of programs around our country for apprenticeships from young people leaving high school who aren't going on to college. And we expanded the availability of college loans to the middle class, at lower cost and better repayment terms.

And of course, our national service program AmeriCorps, is now bigger than the Peace Corps ever was. And there are 20,000 young people all across America working in community service projects, doing things that need to be done and earning funds to go on to college.

Those are the kinds of things we must do more of. Those are the kinds of things that are important. That's why I said a moment ago that if we work on education and we work on incomes,

the rest of this will pretty much take care of itself, I think. That's why I hope the Congress this year will not only raise the minimum wage, but with all this tax cut talk, we can't afford a lot of these tax cuts. We've got too big a deficit. But we ought to give the middle class a break. And the most important thing we could do is give people a tax deduction for any costs they or their children have for any education after high school, because that will raise incomes over the long run.

Let me just ask you one other thing I want you to think about. There are a lot of exciting things going on in this town these days. And as I said, we are debating the role of Government, but there must be a distinction made. If you don't believe in tax-and-spend economics and you don't believe in trickle-down economics and you do believe in invest-and-grow economics and you've seen how it is working the last 2 years, then you also have to reject this debate that we should spend more money on everything or we should spend less money on everything.

We have to make judgments up here based on what is important. Therefore, I would say, let's cut more spending. I have cut and cut and cut, and I want to cut some more. We've got to get this budget deficit down further. We can bring this budget into balance, and we can do it in a fair way. But we have to make judgments. We should not be cutting Head Start. We should not be cutting aid to the public schools. We shouldn't be cutting the apprenticeship programs. And we certainly shouldn't be limiting the availability of college loans to the middle class. We shouldn't be adding to the cost of college education for working families. These are proposals that I think are wrong. We shouldn't be eliminating national service. And we certainly shouldn't be doing all these things either to pay for a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans or because we refuse to find other things to cut. That is wrong. Let's make decisions, and let's do it right, and let's stick up for education and training.

And you have issues in this Congress -- Bob referred to one of them, the Davis-Bacon law. We need to make this economy more competitive. But we need more high wages. We don't need a low-wage strategy. We need a high-wage strategy for the future. We need a high-wage strategy.

Like every other law, it shouldn't be abused. We should not pretend it's something it's not. But it is a decent thing to say that the Government should stand on the side of good wages and the real wages in the community that are good and fair.

I've made appointments, like Bill Gould to the National Labor Relations Board, and Fred Feinstein to be the General Counsel, who now have given you a board that believes in the process of collective bargaining and one that believes we can be fair to workers. These are the kinds of things that we ought to do if you believe our future is in working together.

I'm not for repealing Davis-Bacon. I also believe that we should not walk away from our commitment to safety in the American workplace. In 1993 there were more than half a million construction injuries and over 900 fatalities. We can reform OSHA in ways that you feel better about it and employers feel better about it, where it works better and makes more sense and helps you get more jobs and gain more income and helps them make bigger profits. But we cannot walk away from the fundamental fact that before we were committed to worker safety, a lot more people died in the workplace, a lot more people were permanently maimed in the workplace, a lot of more people were hurt in the workplace. There is a right way and a wrong way to reduce the burden of Government.

I could just -- let me mention one other thing that affects some of your industries. I believe with all my heart if we hadn't passed the environmental protection legislation in the 1970's, the air would not be as clean, the water would not be as pure as it is today, and the legacy we're going to pass along to our children would not be as good. I believe that. I also believe, like any Government bureaucracy, there are things about the EPA that ought to be changed. So we're going to more market-based incentives to give companies incentives to clean up the environment. And Carol Browner, our Administrator, is reducing by 25 percent the paperwork burden of the EPA. It will free up 20 million manhours of work next year. That's a lot of time in a lot of industries that all of you work in.

We're trying to give small businesses a break. We're saying to small businesses -- I was at a **union** print shop in Virginia a couple of weeks ago to announce this -- it you worry about whether you've got an EPA violation and you're afraid to call because you're afraid they'll fine you, now we're going to set up a compliance center, and if you call there and ask, if you ask, you can't be fined for 6 months. And you're going to be given a chance to clean up the problems.

I think we can change the way Government regulation works to make it less nutty. But let's not forget that we have a common public interest in a safe workplace. We have a common public interest in a clean environment. And we have a common public interest in having a high wage, high growth partnership economy, not a low-wage, stagnant, divided economy.

So I say to you, engage the Members of Congress, tell them you welcome the debate about the role of Government. But Government has certain responsibilities: first of all, to change and get rid of the past stuff that doesn't work; to create more opportunity; to provide more security; to insist on re, ore responsibility, but to give people the educaton and training and skills they need to make it in the gist century.

I'm telling you that if we take advantage of this time, if we keep the econonmic strategy, that we have adopted -- that I hammered through the Congress by the narrowest of margins, with all the doubters saying, "Well, we had to either have tax-and-spend or trickle-down," and I knew this was the right thing to do -- if we will stay with this economic strategy, and then, aggressively go after strategies to raise wages, raise incomes, educate and train people, and if we don't throw out the baby with the bath water, this country is going to do just fine.

I am looking for a future for America like the ones most of us who are my age in this audience used to take for granted. And we can give it to our kids, but only if we are tough enough and wise enough and compassionate enough to do what we know in our heart is right. You help, we'll do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Bob Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO.

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Public Papers of the Presidents, October 4, 1993

Public Papers of the Presidents

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CITE: 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1982**LENGTH:** 7470 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks to the **AFL-CIO** Convention in San Francisco, California**BODY:**

Thank you very much. President Kirkland, distinguished platform guests, and to the men and women of the American labor movement, let me tell you first I am glad to be here. I feel like I'm home, and I hope you feel like you have a home in Washington.

For most of the 20th century the union movement in America has represented the effort to make sure that people who worked hard and played by the rules were treated fairly, had a chance to become middle class citizens, raise middle class kids, and give their children a chance to have a better life than they did. You have worked for that. You have done that.

For too long, in the face of deep and profound problems engulfing all the world's advanced nations, you have been subjected to a political climate in which you were asked to bear the blame for forces you did not create, many times when you were trying to make the situation better. I became President in part because I wanted a new partnership for the labor movement in America.

Before I get into the remarks that I came here to make about all of our challenges at home and the economic challenges facing us, I have to make a few remarks this morning about developments in the world in the last 48 hours.

The labor movement has been active, particularly in the last few years with the end of the cold war, in the effort to promote democracy abroad, to guarantee the right of people freely to join their own unions, and to work for freedom within their own countries. In that context most of you, I know, have strongly supported and looked with great favor on the movement toward democracy in Russia.

The United States continues to stand firm in its support of President Yeltsin because he is Russia's democratically elected leader. We very much regret the loss of life in Moscow, but it is clear that the opposition forces started the conflict and that President Yeltsin had no other alternative than to try to restore order. It appears as of this moment that that has been done, I have as of this moment absolutely no reason to doubt the personal commitment that Boris Yeltsin made to let the Russian people decide their own future, to secure a new Constitution with democratic values and democratic processes, to have a new legislative branch elected with democratic elections, and to subject himself, yet again, to a democratic vote of the people. That is all that we can ask.

I think also, most of you know that in a military action yesterday, the United States sustained the loss of some young American soldiers in Somalia. I deeply regret the loss of their lives. They are working to ensure that anarchy and starvation do not return to a nation in which over 300,000 people have lost their lives, many of them children, before the United States led the U.N. mission there, starting late last year. I want to offer my profound condolences to the families of the United States Army personnel who died there. They were acting in the best spirit of America.

As you know, the United States has long had plans to withdraw from Somalia and leave it to others in the United Nations to pursue the common objectives. I urged the United Nations and the Secretary-General in my speech at the United Nations a few days ago to start a political process so that the country could be turned back over to Somalis who would not permit the kind of horrible

bloodshed and devastation to reoccur. And I hope and pray that that will happen. In the meanwhile, you may be sure that we will do whatever is necessary to protect our own forces in Somalia and to complete our mission there.

From the struggle against communism in Eastern Europe to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the union movement in America has always answered the challenges of our time. It must be a source of great pride to you to see these elections unfold, to see the remarkable movement toward a genuine multiracial society within a democratic framework in South Africa. It must, likewise, be a source of continuing frustration to you to see that even as the ideas and the values that you have espoused now for decades are being embraced around the world, here in our country and in virtually every other wealthy country in the world, middle class workers are under assault from global economic forces that seem beyond the reach of virtually any government policy.

We now know that every wealthy country in the world is having trouble creating jobs. We now know that in the last several years, inequality of income got worse in every major country. We know that we had more growing inequality in America than anyplace else because we actually embraced it. I mean, the whole idea of trickle-down economics was to cut taxes on the wealthiest Americans, raise taxes on the middle class, let the deficit balloon, and hope that the investment from the wealthy would somehow expand opportunity to everybody else.

We know that didn't work, and it made the situation worse. It left us with a \$ 4 trillion debt. It left us with a deficit of over \$ 300 billion a year. It left us with a legacy of weakened opportunities for workers in the workplace, too little investment, a paralyzed budget, and no strategy to compete and win in the global economy, and more inequality in America than any of the other wealthy countries. But we also know that the same problems we "have are now being found in Germany, in Japan, in all of Europe, in the other advanced nations.

So we have to face the honest fact that we are facing unprecedented challenges in our own midst to the very way of life that the labor movement has fought so hard to guarantee for others around the world for decades. And therefore, it is important that we think through these issues, that we take positions on them, that we agree and that we disagree in the spirit of honest searching for what the real nature of this world is we're living in and where we are going.

The most important thing to me today is that you know that this administration shares your values and your hopes and your dreams and the interest of your children, and that together -- [applause] -- and that I believe together we can work our way through this very difficult and challenging time, recognizing that no one fully understands the dimensions of the age in which we live and exactly how we are going to recreate opportunity for all Americans who are willing to do what it takes to be worthy of it.

The labor movement, historically, has always been on the cutting edge of change and the drive to empower workers and give them more dignity on the job and in their lives. Almost a half a century ago, at the end of World War II, labor helped to change America and the world. At home and abroad, labor helped to create a generation of prosperity and to create the broad middle class that we all cherish so much today.

Now we have to do it again. We're at a time of change that I am convinced is as dramatic as the dawning of the Industrial Age. We can no longer tell our sons and daughters -- we know this now -- that they will enter a job at the age of 18 or 21, enjoy secure paychecks and health benefits and retirement benefits for the rest of their working lives and retire from the same job with the same company at the age of 65 or 62.

Our changing economy tells us now that the average 18-year-old will change work seven times in a lifetime even if they stay with the same company and certainly if they change; that when people lose their jobs now, they really aren't on unemployment, they're looking for reemployment; that most unemployment today is not like it used to be: When people got unemployed for decades, it was because there was a temporary downturn in the economy, and when the economy turned up

again, most people who were unemployed were hired back by their old employer. Today, most people who are unemployed eventually get hired back usually by a different employer for a different job and unless we are very good at what we do for them, often at lower wages and less benefits. So it is clear that what we need is not an unemployment system but a reemployment system in recognition of the way the world works today.

We know, too, that most American working people are working harder than they ever have in their lives; that the average work week is longer today than it was 20 years ago; that real hourly wages adjusted for inflation peaked in 1973, and so most people are working harder for the same or lower real wages than they were making 20 years ago.

We know that in the eighties there was a dramatic restructuring of manufacturing; that being followed in the nineties with a dramatic restructuring of the service industries. We know that for the last 12 years, in every single year, the Fortune 500 companies lowered employment in the United States in six figures, and that in the years where we have gained jobs, they've come primarily from starting new businesses and from companies with between, say, 500 and 1,000 workers expanding, as the whole nature of this economy changes.

We know that the cost of health care has increased so much that millions of American workers who kept their jobs never got a pay raise because all the increased money went to pay more for the same health care. We know that some of our most powerful industrial engines, especially in industries like autos and steel have shown breathtaking increases in productivity with deep changes in the work force supported by the labor movement, and still are having trouble competing in the world, in part, because their health costs may be as much as a dime on the dollar more than all of their competitors.

We know, as I said at the beginning, that all the wealthy countries in the world are now having trouble creating jobs. If you look at France, for example, in the late 1980's, they actually had an economy that grew more rapidly than Germany's, and yet their unemployment rate never went below 9.5 percent.

So what are we to do? It seems to me that we clearly have to make some changes in the way we look at the world and the way we approach the world. And in order to make those changes, we have to ask ourselves, what do we have to do to make the American people secure enough to make the changes? One of the things that has really bothered me in the late, latter stages of this era that we're moving out of is that so few people have been so little concerned about rampant insecurity among ordinary American middle class citizens. It is impossible for people in their personal lives to make necessary changes if they are wildly insecure.

You think about that in your own life. You think about a personal challenge you faced, a challenge your family has faced. The same thing is true in the workplace. The same thing is true of a community. The same thing is true of a team. The same thing is true of our country. We have to struggle to redefine a new balance between security and change in this country because if we're not secure, we won't change, and if we don't change, we'll get more insecure, because the circumstances of the world will continue to grind us down.

And that's what makes this such a difficult time, because we have to rethink so many things at once. I ran for President because I was tired of 20 years of declining living standards, of 12 years of trickle-down economics and antiworker policies, and rhetoric that blamed people who are working harder for the problems that others did not respond to, and because I believe that we needed a new partnership in America, a new sense of community, not just business and labor and government but also people without regard to their color or their region or anything else. I thought we didn't have anybody to waste, and it looks to me like we were wasting a lot of people and that we needed to put together. I thought the country was going in the wrong direction, and we should turn it around. But I was then and am now under no illusions that we could do it overnight or that I could do it, unless we did it together.

The beginning of the security necessary to change, I think, is in having a Government that is plainly on the side of working Americans. I believe that any of your leaders who work with this administration will tell you that we are replacing a Government that for years worked labor over, with a Government that works with labor. We have a Secretary of Labor in Bob Reich who understands that, at a time when money and management can travel across the globe in a microsecond, our prosperity depends more than anything else on the skills and the strengths of our working people. No one can take that away from us. And our people are still our most important asset, even more than they were 20 years ago.

We have nominated a Chair of the National Labor Relations Board in Bill Gould, and a new member, Peggy Browning, who believe in collective bargaining. We have a Director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Joseph Dear who comes from the labor movement and believes that workers should be protected in the workplace. We have two people in executive positions in the Labor Department in Joyce Miller and Jack Otero who were on your executive council. We have two people in the SEIU in executive positions in Karen Nussbaum and Jerry Polas who are leading us to make progress.

This administration rescinded President Reagan's order banning all reemployment of PATCO workers forever. And we rescinded President Bush's orders with regard to Government-funded contracting and one-sided information given to workers in the workplace. And this week I will sign the Hatch Act Reform Act to give Government employees political rights they have been denied for too long.

One week ago yesterday, on a Sunday morning, I came in from my early morning run, and I turned to my right as I walked into the White House, and I saw a family standing there, a father, a mother, and three daughters, one of whom was in a wheelchair. And the person who was with them who worked for me said, "Mr. President, this little girl has got terminal cancer, and she was asked by the Make A Wish Foundation what she wanted to do, and she said she wanted to come to the White House and visit you. So we're giving her a special tour."

So I went over, and I shook hands with them and apologized for my condition and told them I'd get cleaned up and come back, and we'd take a picture. And a few minutes later I showed up, looking more like my job. And I visited with this wonderful child, desperately ill, for a while. And then I talked to her sisters, and then I talked to her mother. And I talked to her father. And as I turned around to go off, the father grabbed me by the arm and he said, he said, "Let me tell you something. If you ever get to wondering whether it makes a difference who's the President," he said, "look at my child. She's probably not going to make it, and the weeks I've spent with her have been the most precious time of my life. And if you hadn't been elected, we wouldn't have had a family and medical leave law that made it possible for me to be with my child in this time."

Now, I believe, in short, that it ought to be possible. to be a good parent and a good worker. I believe that it ought to be possible for people to make their own judgments about whether they want to be organized at work or not and how they're going to be -- *[applause]*. And I believe if we're really going to preserve the American workplace as a model of global productivity, we have to let people who know how to do their jobs better than other people do have more empowerment to do those jobs and to make those changes in the workplace.

That's why, as we work on the Vice President's reinventing Government initiative, we work so closely with Federal employees and their unions. When the Vice President spoke with business leaders and workers who had changed their companies, they all said the same thing: You've got to have the workers; you have to have them do it, tell you how to do it, tell you how to make the companies more productive.

Now, that's why yesterday I signed an Executive order -- on Friday -- creating a National Partnership Council. For the next several months the leaders of Federal employee unions, including John Sturdivant, the president of the American Federation of Government Employees, who is here today, will work with the leaders of our administration to make our Government more effective,

cost less, and more importantly, to make the jobs of the rank and file Federal employees more interesting, more stimulating, more customer-oriented, by doing things that they have been telling us they should be able to do, but that the system has not permitted them to do in the past. I applaud John and the other people in the unions representing Federal employees for what they have done. This is an unprecedented partnership that I think will benefit every American.

We want to make worker empowerment and labor-management cooperation a way of life in this country, from the factory floor to the board room. We've created a commission on the future of labor and management relations, with leaders from labor, business, and the academy, chaired by former Labor Secretary John Dunlap. And I've asked Secretary Reich to create a commission to study and improve relationships in government workplaces at every level, at the State and county and local level, as well as at the Federal level.

I believe this is something that a person like Bob Reich is uniquely situated to do. And it's the kind of thing that we ought to be promoting because we have to use this opportunity we have to try to take what has worked for workers and their businesses and spread it around the country.

For the last 12 years we've had a lot of finger-pointing and blame-placing, and we've got these stirring examples of success that we could be trying to replicate. That's what we ought to be doing, taking what works. And it always is a workplace in which workers have more say. And we're going to do what we can to get that done.

Now, on the security issue, let me just mention some other things. In addition to the family leave act, the budget bill which passed by such a landslide in the Congress contained what may well be the most important piece of economic reform for working people in 20 years, by expanding the earned-income tax credit so that you can say to people, if you work 40 hours a week and you have children in your home, you will not be poor. We are bringing new hope and new dignity into the lives of 15 million working families that make \$ 27,000 a year or less. They'll no longer be taxed into poverty. There won't be a Government program to try to lift them out of poverty. Their own efforts will lift them out of poverty because the tax system will be changed to reward them. And there will never again be an incentive for people to be on welfare instead of work because the tax system will say, if you're willing to go to work and work 40 hours a week, no matter how tough it is, we will lift you out of poverty. That is the kind of prowork, profamily policy this country ought to have.

Something else that was in that bill that most Americans don't even know about yet that will benefit many, many of you in this room and the people you represent is a dramatic reform of the student loan system that will eliminate waste, lower the interest rates on student loans, make the repayment terms easier so that young people can repay their loans no matter how much they borrow as a percentage of their income, limited so they can repay it. Even though we'll have tougher repayment terms, they'll be able to do it. We'll collect the money, but people will be able to borrow money and pay it back at lower interest rates, at better repayment terms. And therefore, no one will ever be denied access to a college education because of the cost.

When you put that with our Goals 2000 program, the education reform program for the public schools, and the work that the Education Secretary Dick Riley is doing with Secretary Reich to redo the worker training programs in the country you have a commitment to raise standards in education and open opportunities to our young people.

We need higher standards in our public schools. Al Shanker has long been a voice for that. He now has allies in the NEA and other places in the country who are saying, "Let's have national standards and evaluate what our kids are learning and how our schools are doing."

I believe we need to give our young people more choices within the public school system, and I have advocated letting States try a lot of things within districts. Let kids choose which schools they attend. Let school districts decide how they want to set up and organize schools. I think that a lot of changes need to be made in a lot of school districts. But let me say that we don't want to throw

out the baby with the bath water. There are also a lot of school districts that are doing a great job under difficult circumstances. There are a lot of schools within school districts that are performing well under difficult circumstances.

And if we've learned anything, we've learned that the best way to increase the quality of education is to find better principals, get better leaders among the teachers, let them have more say over how school is run, and evaluate them based on their results rather than telling them how to do every last jot and tiddle of their job every day.

We have learned these things -- and if I might, since we're in California, say a special word -- therefore, I believe that having worked for 12 years for higher standards, more choices and greater changes in public education, I'm in a little bit of a position to say that if I were a citizen of the State of California, I would not vote for Proposition 174, The Private Voucher Initiative.

Now, and let me tell you why. Let me tell you why. First of all, keep in mind a lot of the schools out here are doing a good job. I can say this, you know, I never was part of the California education system. I have studied this system out here for more than a decade. They have undertaken a lot of very impressive reforms and many of their schools are doing a good job. I was interviewed last night by two people from a newspaper in Sacramento, and one of them just volunteered that he had two children in the public schools there, and they were getting a terrific education.

This bill would start by taking \$ 1.3 billion right off the top to send a check to people who already have their kids in private schools, and who didn't need any Government money to do it, and taking it right off the top away from a school system that doesn't have enough money to educate the kids it's got in it in the first place.

Second thing it would do is to impose no real standards on the quality of the programs which could be funded: who could set up a school; what standards they'd have to meet; what tests the kids would have to pass. Just take your voucher, and who cares whether a private school is a legitimate school or not. That is a significant issue. And all you have to do is to work in this field for a few years to understand that that is a significant issue.

Wouldn't it be ironic that at the very moment we're finally trying to find a way to measure the performance and raise the standards of the public schools, we turn around and start sending tax money to private schools that didn't have to meet any standards at all. When we're trying to get one part of our business, we're going to make the other part worse.

And finally, let me just say, I have always supported the notion that American schools ought to have competition and the fact that we have a vibrant tradition of pluralistic education and private schools and religious private schools was a good thing, not a bad thing for America. But all the years when I grew up, and all the times I saw that, and for a couple years of my life when I was a little boy, when I went to a Catholic school, when my folks moved from one place to another, and we lived way out in the country and didn't know much about the schools in the new area where we were, no one ever thought that the church would want any money from the taxpayers to run their schools. In fact, they said just the opposite, "We don't want to be involved in that." That's what the First Amendment is all about.

So I think we have to really think through -- I have spent 12 years before I became President overwhelmingly obsessed with reform of the public school system, wanting more choices in the system, wanting more accountability, wanting more flexibility about how schools were organized and established and operated. But I can tell you that this is not the way to get it done, and the people will regret this if they pass it. I hope the people of California don't do that.

Now, you can educate people all you want -- and I wanted to say a little more about that. The Labor Secretary and I are working on trying to take all these 150 different Government training programs and give local communities and States the power to consolidate them, working with you, and just fund the things that work on a State-by-State basis, and to set up a system of lifetime

education and training.

I don't know how many of you saw the television program I did last night in California, but one man, looked to be in his early fifties, saying "We need a training program that gives my company some incentives to retrain me, not just people who are 25, but people who are 55." And we are trying to do that. We're trying to set up a lifetime education and training program that starts when young people are in high school, so if they want to work and learn in high school they can work and learn in high school, so that we can have the kind of school-to-work transition that many of our competitors have for all those kids that won't go to college and won't get 4-year educations. We've got to do that.

But if you do all that, you still have to have someplace for people to work. We can educate and train people all we want, but we have to be able to create more jobs. How are we going to do that at a time when the Government is not directly funding the defense jobs that have kept America's job base up for so long?

Well, the first thing we've got to do is make up our mind we're going to be serious about defense conversion. Last year when I was a candidate for President -- [applause] -- last year when I was a candidate for President, I went all over the country -- and I wasn't in the Congress and didn't have a vote -- pleading with the Congress to pass the defense conversion bill. They did it, and the previous administration absolutely refused to spend \$ 500 million to help convert from a defense to a high-tech domestic economy. So we have released the money. And we're going to try to get up to \$ 20 billion spent on defense conversion and reinvestment in the jobs of tomorrow over the next 5 years. It is very important.

We have got over 2,800 proposals in this country for technology-reinvestment initiatives, to match with what will soon be about a billion dollars in Government money that can create hundreds of thousands of jobs in America. People are brimming with ideas out there to create new jobs.

I was at McClellan Air Force Base yesterday, and the airbase is working with people, in the local community and the local universities and with the Federal defense labs. They have made new electric cars. They have made new manufacturing component parts to try to come up with economical ways to do it and allow those parts to be made in America. And they are targeting things that are now made overseas and imported here. That's the sort of thing that we can use our high-tech defense base to do, and we should be doing it. It's going to make for more jobs for America.

They have developed a prototype car that gets 80 miles per gallon at 55 miles per hour on the highway, goes to 60 miles per hour in 12 seconds, has a maximum speed of 100 miles an hour. That's not bad. If we can just figure out how people can afford it, we can put people to work making them. But it's a good beginning.

We announced last week that ground-breaking project with the UAW and Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors are working with the defense labs and all the Government labs on a project to triple the average mileage of American autos within the next 10 years. If they do that, that will create untold numbers "of new jobs here, and we'll be selling cars to people overseas who want that instead of the reverse.

And by the way, I want to compliment the UAW. You know, this year we have regained a lot of our market share in America. People are buying more American cars in America, and we should compliment them for it.

So we have to find ways to create these new jobs. Now, I want to talk a little about health care, but before I do, I want to mention something we disagree on in the context of the trade issue. And listen to this. Since 1986, a significant portion of America's net new jobs have come from trade growth. That's something we can all find from the figures. In California, where we now are, a lot of that has come from Asia, which is the fastest growing part of the world. Asia's growing faster than

any other part of the world; Latin America the second fastest growing part of the world. Everybody knows that is true.

Now, that's why, when I went to Tokyo and met with the leaders of the G-7, the seven big industrial countries, we made an agreement that we should dramatically reduce tariffs on manufactured products around the world in ways that all analysts agree would generate a lot of new manufacturing jobs here in America. There was virtually no dispute about that, because we were largely in competition with other countries that were paying the same or higher wages with the same or better benefits, with high-tech and other manufacturing products that we wanted to sell everywhere. And we're working like crazy to get that done between now and the end of the year.

What is the difference between that and the trade agreement with Mexico? And let's talk about that just a minute, because it's very important, not so you'll agree with me but so you'll know what I want you to know, which is that I would never knowingly do anything to cost an American a job. That's not the business I'm in.

I was a Governor during the last 12 years, when the *maquilladora* system was in place. What did it do? It created a border zone on the other side of the border in Mexico in which people were free to set up plants, operate them by the standards that were enforced there -- or not enforced, as the case may be -- on labor and environmental issues, and then send their products back into this country, produced at much lower labor costs with no tariffs. That was the system set up to try to foster growth there.

But in the 1980's, because of all the economic problems we had, and because of the climate that was promoted in this country that the most important thing you could do was slash your labor costs and who cared about your working people anyway, you had the movement of hundreds of plants down there. And you didn't like it worth a flip. And you were right to be upset about what happened.

Now, I was a Governor of a State that lost plants to Mexico. And my State was so small that when people lost their jobs I was likely to know who they were. This was a big deal to me. I'm also proud of the fact we got one of them to come back before I left office. I'm proud of that, too. But I understand this.

Now, that is the system we have. You also saw this system, ironically, accelerating illegal immigration. Why? For the same reason that a lot of the Chinese boat people were coming over here after they moved to the coastal towns in China, got a job where they made a little more money than they did before, but didn't much like their life, but they got enough money to try to come here. That's what was happening along the *maquilladora* area. A lot of people would come up there, work for a while, then come on up here.

So I understand what the American working people don't like about the present system. The real issue: Will the trade agreement make it worse or better? You think it will make it worse. I think it will make it better. And I'll tell you, I think you're entitled to know why I think that. Because there is no question that, no matter what you think about the adequacy of the side agreements, they will raise the cost of labor and environmental investments above the point where they are now. There is no question that the agreement lowers domestic content requirements in Mexico, so that we'll go from selling say 1,000 to 50,000 or 60,000 American cars down there next year. There's no question that their tariffs are 2 1/2 times higher than ours. And there's no question that we have a trade surplus there, as compared with a \$ 49 billion trade deficit with Japan, an \$ 18 billion trade deficit with China, a \$ 9 billion trade deficit with Taiwan.

We've got a trade problem, all right. It is that the Asian economies are not as open to us as we are to them. That's our huge trade problem. And we're going to have to do better there, because that's where a lot of the money is. So my reasoning is that if their tariffs are higher than ours and their costs go up faster than they're otherwise going to go up, and they're already buying \$

350-a-person worth of American goods, second only to Canada -- replaced Japan as the number two purchaser of manufacturing products this year -- and we got a \$ 5.8 billion trade surplus, it will get better, not worse.

Is it a perfect agreement? No. But I don't want to make the perfect the enemy of the better. I think it is better than the present.

There are two other points I want to make. If the deal is not made with the United States, and instead it's made with Germany or Japan, we could lose access to an 80-million person market and cost ourselves more jobs. And if the deal is made, it could lead to further similar agreements with the emerging market economies of Latin America. And no one believes that anybody's going to invest in Argentina, for example, to export back to the American market. So all barrier dropping the further you get away from here because of transportation costs will lead to more jobs in America through greater trade.

So that's why I think it makes it better, not worse. You're entitled to know that. I don't ask you to agree, but I ask you to make the same arguments inside your own mind, because I would never knowingly do anything to cost America jobs. I'm trying to create jobs in this country.

Now, I'll tell you what I really think. What I really believe is that this has become the symbol of the legitimate grievances of the American working people about the way they've been worked over the last 12 years. That's what I think. And I think those grievances are legitimate. And I think that people are so insecure in their jobs, they're so uncertain that the people they work for really care about them, they're so uncertain about what their kids are looking at in the future, that people are reluctant to take any risks for change.

And so let me close with what I started with. I have got to lay a foundation of personal security for the working people of this country and their families in order to succeed as your President, and you have to help me do it. We have got to reform the job training system of this country, to make it a reemployment system, not an unemployment system, and to give it to kids starting when they're in high school.

We have got to have an investment strategy that will create jobs here. And that's why we removed all those export controls that were cold war relics on computers and supercomputers and telecommunications equipment, opening just this month \$ 37 billion worth of American products to exports. That is important.

That's why I want to pass a crime bill to put 50,000 more police officers on the street, pass the Brady bill and take those automatic weapons out of the hands of the teenagers that are vandalizing and brutalizing our children in this country. And, my fellow Americans, that is why we have got to pass a comprehensive health care bill to provide security to all Americans. And we've got to do it now.

How many Americans do you know who lost their health insurance because they lost their jobs? Who never got a pay increase because of the rising cost of their health care? Who can never change jobs because they have a sick child? Millions of them. How many companies are represented in this room who could be selling more everywhere across the board, more abroad and more at home, if their health care costs were no greater than their competitors around the world?

Let's face it folks, we're spending over 14 percent of our income on health care. Canada's at 10. Germany and Japan are under nine. The Germans went up toward 9 percent of their income on health care, they had a national outbreak of hysteria about how they were losing control of their health care system. And yet they all cover everybody and no one loses their health insurance. And when I say we can do that and we can do it without a broad-based tax increase, people look at me like I have slipped a gear. *[Laughter]*

But I have spent over 3 years studying this system. And the First Lady and her task force have

mobilized thousands of experts in the most intense effort to examine social reform in my lifetime. And they have recommended that we adopt a system which, first of all, builds on the system that you enjoy: an employer-based system where the employer contributes and, in some cases, the employee does and some not; a system that is focused on keeping what is good about American health care -- doctors, and nurses, and medical research and technology -- and fixing, what is wrong -- not covering everybody, kicking them off after they have a serious illness, not letting people move their jobs, having some people in such tiny groups of insurance that 40 percent of their premium goes to profit and administrative costs, and spending a dime on the dollar, a dime on every dollar in a \$ 90 billion system goes to paperwork that wouldn't go in any other system in the world -- \$ 90 billion a year on that alone. Never mind the fraud and the abuse, and the incentives in this system to churn it, to perform unnecessary procedures just because the more you do the more you earn.

We can do better than that. So I want to just say, this system will be a good one. Everybody will get a health care security card like this. I feel like that guy in the ad. I'm supposed to say, "Don't leave home without it," when I pull it out. [Laughter] But I want everybody to have a health care security card like this. Just like a Social Security card. And I want people to have their health care access whether they're working or unemployed, whether they work for a little business or a big one.

Under the system we have proposed, if you've got a better deal now, you can keep it. If your employer pays 100 percent of benefits now, you can keep it. And we don't propose to tax any benefits that are above, the minimum package. We told those who wanted that to give us 10 years before we put that provision in because within 10 years we'll have the minimum benefit package we start with, plus full dental benefits and full mental-health benefits and full preventive-care benefits, so it will be as good or better than any package now offered by any employer in America. Then, if somebody wants to buy something over and above that, we can talk about it. But we are not going to take anything away from you, you have.

What we are going to do is two things for you if you have a good policy. We're going to make it easier for your employer to keep these benefits you have now by slowing the rate of health care cost inflation, not by cutting health care spending, by slowing the rate of inflation in health care cost, and by removing the enormous burden of retiree benefits from our most productive companies. That will stabilize the health care benefits of working people and good plans.

The other thing we're going to do for you is to limit what can be taken away from you which is worth something. So by saying that for people who don't have any insurance now, their employer will pay 80 percent and the employees will pay 20, we are saying that no matter what happens to you, there's a limit to what can be taken away from you. So it will be easy for you to keep, easier for your employer to keep what you've got, and for you, and there will be a limit to what can be taken away.

Is it fair to ask all those employers and employees who don't have any coverage now to contribute something? You bet it is. Why? Because your premium's higher than it otherwise would be because you're paying for them now.

Can we do that without bankrupting small business? Of course, we can. We have a plan that gives a significant discount to smaller new businesses, and to smaller established businesses with lower wage employees that are operating on narrow margins.

How are we going to pay for this? Two-thirds of it will be paid for by employers and employees contributing into the system that they get a free ride in now. One-sixth of it will be paid for with a cigarette tax and with a fee on very large companies who opt out of the system so they can pay for the cost of insuring the pool and the discounts to small business, and most important, for the health education and research that makes us all richer because we are going to pay for that and for expanded public health clinics. And one-sixth of it will come from slowing the rate of growth. When you hear people say, "Oh, Clinton wants to cut Medicare and Medicaid, let me tell you

something folks, we're cutting defense. We've held all domestic investment that's discretionary flat, which means if I want to spend more money on job training, on defense conversion, or on Head Start, I have to go cut something else dollar for dollar for the next 5 years. That's what we've done. We've cut defense as much as we possibly can right at the edge, held everything else flat.

You know what Medicare and Medicaid are doing? They're going up at 3 times the rate of inflation. What have I proposed to do? Let them go up at twice the rate of inflation. They say in Washington I can't do it. I don't talk to a single doctor who understands what we're going to do who doesn't think we can achieve those savings without hurting the quality of health care. If we can't get down to twice the rate of inflation from 3 times the rate of inflation, there's something wrong somewhere.

Now, that's how we propose to finance this. And I am pleading with you to help me pass this bill. No matter how good your health care plan is now, don't you believe for a minute you could never lose it, or at least get locked into your present job. And I am pleading with you to do it so that we can give to the rest of America, as well as to you and your families, the kind of personal security we have got to have to face the bewildering array of challenges that are out there before us.

You know as well as I do that we are hurtling toward the 21st century into a world that none of us can fully perceive. But we have to imagine what we want it to be like. We want it to be a world in which the old rules that you grew up believing in apply in a new and more exciting age, in which, if you don't have job security, you at least have employment security; in which the Government puts the people first, and in which people have security in their homes, on their streets, in their education benefits, in their health care benefits so that they are capable of seizing these changes and making life richer and more different and more exciting than it has ever been.

That is the great challenge before us. And if we don't adopt the health care reform, we won't get there. If we do, it will open the way to the most incredible unleashing of American energy that we have seen in more than a generation. Together we can do it, and I need your help.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the San Francisco Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Albert Shanker, president, American Federation of Teachers.

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Draft 09/5/00 8:30pm
Josh Gottheimer

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR NATIONAL BREAST
CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
[DATE TBD]**

I am glad to have this opportunity to join the Early Show and Women.com in recognizing National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women. This year alone, 180,000 women will be newly diagnosed with this tragic disease, and it will claim the lives of 40,000 more. And it will claim the lives of 40,000 more.

Breast cancer has touched the lives of nearly every family in America, including my own. Just a few years ago, I lost my mother to it -- and not one day goes by when I don't think about her courage, and the courage of so many women struggling to survive.

But courage alone will not find us a cure for breast cancer. Only a sustained commitment to research will win the war against breast cancer once and for all.

For eight years now, our administration has made fighting breast cancer one of our top priorities. We've nearly doubled funding for cancer research and treatment, and accelerated the approval of cancer drugs while maintaining safe standards. We've strengthened Medicare to make the screening, prevention, and detection of cancer more available and more affordable. We've made sure cancer patients can keep their health coverage when they change jobs. And under the First Lady's leadership, we've educated more women about the vital importance of mammography.

When breast cancer is detected at an early stage, the chances of survival are nearly 95 percent. That's why we must keep working to educate more women about the importance of early detection and annual physicals, and the practice of self-examination. That's also why we have to keep fighting for increased investment for breast cancer research.

We may not have a cure yet -- but I have no doubt, that with efforts like yours, we are well on our way to conquering this devastating disease, making breast cancer a thing of the past. But until that day, let us pray for the thousands of men and women who are living with the disease. Thank you.

Draft 09/5/00 8:30pm
Josh Gottheimer

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VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR NATIONAL BREAST
CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
[DATE TBD]**

I am glad to have this opportunity to join the Early Show and Women.com in recognizing National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women. This year alone, 180,000 women will be newly diagnosed with this tragic disease, and it will claim the lives of 40,000 more. And it will claim the lives of 40,000 more.

Breast cancer has touched the lives of nearly every family in America, including my own. Just a few years ago, I lost my mother to it -- and not one day goes by when I don't think about her courage, and the courage of so many women struggling to survive.

But courage alone will not find us a cure for breast cancer. Only a sustained commitment to research will win the war against breast cancer once and for all.

For eight years now, our administration has made fighting breast cancer one of our top priorities. We've nearly doubled funding for cancer research and treatment, and accelerated the approval of cancer drugs while maintaining safe standards. We've strengthened Medicare to make the screening, prevention, and detection of cancer more available and more affordable. We've made sure cancer patients can keep their health coverage when they change jobs. And under the First Lady's leadership, we've educated more women about the vital importance of mammography.

When breast cancer is detected at an early stage, the chances of survival are nearly 95 percent. That's why we must keep working to educate more women about the importance of early detection and annual physicals, and the practice of self-examination. That's also why we have to keep fighting for increased investment for breast cancer research.

We may not have a cure yet -- but I have no doubt, that with efforts like yours, we are well on our way to conquering this devastating disease, making breast cancer a thing of the past. But until that day, let us pray for the thousands of men and women who are living with the disease. Thank you.

Draft 09/5/00 8:30pm
Josh Gottheimer

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR NATIONAL BREAST
CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
[DATE TBD]**

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Draft 10/05/00 6:00 pm

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR
MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
October 20, 2000**

Good evening. I am pleased to join the Make-A-Wish foundation in celebrating its 20 years of serving children with life-threatening illnesses and to congratulate you for the 80,000 wishes you've granted to young people around the world.

For the past eight years, I have been honored to take part in the important work you do. My experiences with Make-A-Wish children stand as some of the most moving and memorable of my time at the White House. I have been truly inspired by every child I have met.

Children like Yoni who came all the way from his home in Israel to meet with me – and who I saw again a year later when I traveled to his country. Children like Sharleen who came from California to our White House Easter Egg Roll and played me a beautiful song on her saxophone. And children like Fred Sanger who joined me for the lighting of our National Christmas tree.

I'm proud that Hillary and I have had so many opportunities to work with organizations like yours on behalf of America's children and children's health. Like you, I believe that children are America's greatest resource and our most precious gift. That's why your work is so important and why I will continue to support research efforts to prevent as many of these horrible illnesses as we can. That's my wish for America; to build a place where every child can live a full, happy and healthy life.

I thank the Make-A-Wish Foundation for giving help and hope to the thousands of children whose lives you have touched and for giving me the opportunity to contribute to your noble cause. God bless you.

Draft 10/05/00 6:00 pm

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VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR
MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION
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October 20, 2000**

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70 EAREN KULLMAN X 67028

Final 10/11/99 11:30am
Josh Gottheimer

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS ON TEACHING
TOLERANCE AND DIVERSITY
LITTLETON, COLORADO
October 26, 1999**

Six months ago, our entire nation was shocked and saddened by the awful tragedy at Columbine High School. Since then, the people of Littleton have shown remarkable resilience and strength in rebuilding their lives and restoring their faith in their community. But they could not have done it without the widespread support from the entire American community, who not only united in grief, but united in action.

This event is another testament to the fundamental goodness of the American spirit. You have put that spirit into action with this national dialogue to encourage tolerance and promote diversity in schools across the country.

Our Administration has also worked hard to ensure that all Americans are treated with dignity and equal opportunity. We have fought to pass a strong hate crimes law and have taken steps to end discrimination in the workforce and to bring about diversity in our own Administration. But while we have come a long way on our journey toward reconciliation, understanding and mutual respect, we still have a long way to go.

That's why we must all recommit ourselves to taking strong and decisive action to respect one another, to see our diversity as our greatest strength, and to recognize the fundamental values that define us as One America. If we do that, and continue to hold events like this one, we will move closer to the day when discrimination and acts of hatred are relics of the past.

Now, I'm happy to answer some questions from you:

1. Amanda, Flood Middle School, Englewood, CO (Caucasian female, grade 8):

Q: "Growing up in Arkansas, what personal experiences did you have at school during the beginning of the segregation of schools? Looking back, what would you encourage or do differently?"

A:

In 1957, I was 11 years old, living in Hot Springs, Arkansas, when the eyes of the world were fixed on the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock. Like most Southerners at that time, I never attended school with a person of another race until I went to college. Not only did I go to segregated schools, but I swam in segregated public pools, sat in all-white sections at

October 5, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOSH GOTTHEIMER and JEFF SHESOL

FROM: MARC LEWIS

SUBJECT: DIVIDED GOVERNMENT &
THE INFORMED ELECTORATE

Divided Government

According to polls, most voters prefer the notion of a divided government, in which one party controls one or both houses of Congress while the other controls the executive branch. For the past thirty years, a system of divided government has generally presided in America. The same party has controlled the Congress and the presidency in only 18 of the past 48 years.

Though many voters feel that divided government enhances the “separation of powers” function of the Constitution, such a system can be said to have two major flaws: policy inaction (whereby partisan interests prevent the passage of meaningful legislation) and scandal-mongering (whereby one branch of government attempts to embarrass the other instead of tending to national business).

A system of divided government may have implications for a president’s reliance on the **executive order** (EO). FDR – presiding over a mostly unified government – issued more than 3,500 EOs over the course of his presidency, far more than modern presidents. The number of EOs issued by the executive branch since the Hoover administration are as follows:

Herbert Hoover:	1,011 EOs issued
Franklin D. Roosevelt:	3,728
Harry S Truman:	896
Dwight D. Eisenhower:	486
John F. Kennedy:	214
Lyndon B. Johnson:	324
Richard Nixon*:	346
Gerald R. Ford:	169
Jimmy Carter:	320
Ronald Reagan*:	381
George Bush:	166
William J. Clinton*:	335 (current as of September 22, 2000)

*two-term president during a divided government

Most voters feel that divided government augments the separation of powers and helps to ensure bipartisan politics in Washington. A 1998 Miami Herald poll found that 61 percent of likely voters favor divided government, having Democratic governor and Republican-controlled Legislature, or vice versa, in order to maintain checks and balances.

Further studies illustrate this tendency to prefer divided government:

- In a December 1999 NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, 28 percent of respondents agreed with the statement: "Divided government is bad for the nation because the two parties gridlock and nothing gets accomplished." 66 percent, however, said "divided government is good for the nation because the only way to pass something through Congress and have it signed by the President is for both parties to compromise."
- One-third in another NBC News question indicated that it was better if the same party controls Congress and the presidency "...so they can work together more closely." Again, however, 60 percent disagreed, claiming that "it is better to have different political parties controlling the Congress and the presidency to prevent either one from going too far."
- In questions in 1996, 1997 and 1999, roughly 55 percent said our current divided government works well for the country; around 35 percent said it does not.
- According to the Dallas Morning News, many voters in the 1996 election simultaneously voted for President Clinton and GOP Congressional Candidates in a conscious attempt to ensure a balanced government.

Information Level Among the Electorate

Though political information has become much more accessible through technological developments, such as cable television and the Internet, it has not helped to inform the electorate. This is largely due to two factors: many voters ignore political information, and a great majority of media coverage fails to inform voters.

It is difficult to determine precisely how well the electorate is informed, but voter awareness can be linked to voter turnout. For political apathy, the statistics are clear: Americans are largely uninterested in politics. In 1998, voter turnout dropped to its lowest level in 56 years, even with the addition of 8 million eligible voters to the electorate.

Despite our ascent into the information age, public opinion researchers do not expect the wealth of new political information available electronically to increase voter participation in this year's presidential election. According to the Pew Research Center for People and the Press, the internet will provide a wealth of political information, but much of this information will only be utilized by those already interested in politics. The Pew survey indicates that political information on the Internet is "not for the people who are marginal in terms of their interest in elections and politics and the larger world."

The proliferation of political information on the Internet can be compared to the development of C-SPAN in the early 1980s. Many pundits heralded the appearance of gavel-to-gavel coverage, claiming that the network would allow Americans to become more informed about congressional proceedings. Despite saturation coverage, however, Americans probably know less about Congress now than they did before the broadcasts.

In the 1996 presidential campaign, political information was readily available via network television, cable television, print sources, and the Internet. Despite this easy access, however, most voters were highly uninformed of the crucial issues in the campaign. This can be largely attributed to the media's tendency to focus on the "horse-race" and "character" aspects of a political campaign, as opposed to focusing on substantive issues. According to an extensive survey conducted by the Media Studies Center after the 1996 election, 63% of voters felt the media devoted too much attention to candidates' personal lives. 50% felt the media paid too much attention to the horse-race aspect with regard to daily polls, and 46% felt the media failed to pay sufficient attention to the candidates' stand on issues.

In 1996, voters were unhappy with the commentary-laden coverage of the campaign. Instead, they sought more concise, accessible summaries and follow-ups of where the campaign and the candidates stood. As such, though political information has become much more accessible via technological developments, it has not helped to inform the electorate.

resolution programs. It is critical to me, and to the nation, that our young people feel safe – and are safe – at school. We'll keep working toward that goal.



Lowell A. Weiss
05/01/2000 07:20:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
cc: Joshua S. Gottheimer/WHO/EOP@EOP
Subject: potus teen conf remarks -- final

3

Draft 5/1/00 6:45pm
Lowell Weiss

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON TEENS
THE WHITE HOUSE
May 2, 2000**

Acknowledge: Mrs. Clinton; Sec. Slater; Sec. Herman; Sec. Shalala; AG Reno; Deputy AG Holder; Chairman Kennard; CNS CEO Wofford; Director Lachance; Deputy Dir. of ONDCP Donald Vereen; Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones; Dr. David Hamburg, President Emeritus of the Carnegie Corporation. Back in the late '80s, I had an opportunity to work closely with Dr. Hamburg on Carnegie's landmark "Turning Points" report, which helped educators to see new ways in which they could better meet the developmental needs of young adolescents.

When you boil it all down, there is one belief I brought with me to this job that underlies my approach to nearly every important issue – whether it's strengthening our economy or improving our schools, expanding quality health care or building One America. It is my fundamental belief that within every single child there is a brilliant spark of possibility – and that this society, this American village, has no greater obligation than to kindle that spark in every way it can. Today, we are here to focus on kindling that spark in the teenage years – a time of rapid growth and exploration, challenge and change.

The fact is, every time I welcome young people here to the White House for events like this, I can't help but think back to the day I first came here as a teenager and had a chance to shake President Kennedy's hand. I know that with the right inspiration, preparation, and love, so many of the young people I have met will go on to do amazing things. One might discover the cure for cancer. One might lead the first human mission to Mars. One might become President of the United States.

Unfortunately, much of what we read about teenagers these days does not focus on this remarkable promise. It focuses on problems: Teenagers losing their way. Teenagers turning inward. Teenagers acting out in violence.

So I believe that one of the most valuable things we can do today is to take a balanced look at the life of teenagers today. And to that end, we asked the Council of Economic Advisers to prepare a statistical portrait of America's teens.

The good news is that teenagers today live far healthier, more prosperous and promising lives than ever before. The economic rewards of education are at an all-time high, and teens have responded by completing high school and enrolling in college at record rates. More teenagers are giving back to their communities through volunteer service. Many harmful behaviors among teens are on the decline – including youth violence, homicide, suicide, teenage pregnancy, and, very recently, drug use.

The report also highlights the areas where we simply must improve. There are still significant opportunity gaps that separate white students from students of color. Teen smoking, drug use, and pregnancy are still far too high. And despite a marked decline in teen homicide over the past few years, there are still far too many communities being scarred by youth gun violence. Not surprisingly, the CEA found that gun-related teen deaths – from deliberate acts as well as accidents – are highly correlated with gun ownership rates. In states with fewer guns, there are fewer teen deaths. That is a key finding I hope no one will overlook.

Perhaps the most empowering finding in this new report is the extent to which parents have the opportunity to guide their teenagers on the right path. In fact, just sitting down to dinner with your children can have an enormously positive impact. The report found that teenagers who had dinner with parents five nights a week are far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide, and drugs. And this holds true for single-parent families as well as two-parent families, across all income and racial groups.

For the past seven years, the First Lady, the Vice President, and I have worked hard to complement parents' efforts to raise healthy, hopeful, and responsible children. The very first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act. This law has now given more than 20 million Americans the opportunity to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave without fear of losing their jobs – and we want to expand it even more.

We've worked to turn teenagers away from risks to their health and future – by cutting the rate of drug use with powerful anti-drug messages, by standing up to the tobacco industry, and by making the single largest investment in children's health care since 1965.

We've worked to make schools stronger and safer. My new budget would help modernize and rebuild 6,000 public schools and help reinvent high schools on a smaller scale to make them more responsive to student needs. It would also greatly increase funding for our Safe School Initiative, which unites principals, parents, police, and others in the community in designing comprehensive strategies to stem violence in and out of school. And it would greatly expand quality after-school programs, to give teenagers a safe place to learn in the hours before their parents get home from work.

We created AmeriCorps, which has now given more than 150,000 young people a chance to earn money for college while serving their communities. In the process, we've come to see that

national service is one of the most powerful antidotes to the alienation and isolation that so many young people feel. When young people join AmeriCorps, they become an essential part of a team. They join a culture where teens turn to action, not anger ... where they are trained to find everyone's strengths, including their own. That's one big reason why the Council of Economic Advisers' found that teens who participated in service projects were 75% less likely to drop out of school.

We're working with industry to give parents the tools to protect their children in the New Media Age – from the V-chip to Internet filtering technologies to voluntary ratings for TV programs and video and Internet games. The next step is clear: As the First Lady said, we must have a single voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment that is easier to enforce and easier for parents to understand.

Today, I am pleased to announce two other important ways we can help parents and their teenagers. First, I am signing an Executive Order that prohibits discrimination against parents in the federal workforce. It is clear that some employers are reluctant to hire or promote employees who have children at home. Some of you may have experienced this yourselves. The goal of this Executive Order is to say to all employers: Don't put up glass ceilings for parents. A parent's job is tough enough.

Second, I am pleased to announce that the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and Tobacco Free Kids, and the federal government have teamed up to produce a comprehensive guide to help parents support their teenagers through this crucial developmental period.

I wish I could spend the rest of the day with you, but unfortunately I cannot. Before I depart, I have the honor of introducing and hearing our keynote speaker: Ben Casey, the President of the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas. Mr. Casey, who holds degrees in psychology and counseling from UCLA and Chapman College, currently oversees 145 program centers that serve a quarter of all families in the Greater Dallas region. We've asked him to speak to us today about his extensive experience with teens and the Y's new poll, which has some important findings about the way teens and parents view their communication and time together. Mr. Ben Casey...

[After Ben Casey speaks, you will say a brief closing word and depart.]

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Message Sent To:

aedmonds1@home.com @ inet
Shirley S. Sagawa/WHO/EOP@EOP
MaryEllen C. McGuire/WHO/EOP@EOP
Ann O'Leary/OPD/EOP@EOP
Lowell J. Taylor/CEA/EOP@EOP
Sharon Kennedy/WHO/EOP@EOP
June Shih/WHO/EOP@EOP

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE
MEMPHIS, TN
April 14, 2000

Good evening. I am so pleased to join you today, as the National Campaign Against Youth Violence kicks off its City-by-City tour. Seven years ago, I had the honor to speak at the Church of God in Christ there in Memphis. That morning I spoke about the awful toll of youth violence and gun crime in our communities. I said that day, "Unless we deal with the ravages of crime and violence...none of the other things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go."

Together, we have come a long way. With our strategy of putting more cops on the beat and getting more guns off the street, overall crime has fallen for the seventh year in a row. The juvenile violent crime arrest rate is the lowest in ten years. And with 100,000 new community police officers and the Brady law, we have kept guns out of the hands of half a million felons, fugitives and stalkers.

But while we have made great progress, one act of violence is still one too many. Nearly a year has passed since the awful tragedy at Columbine – and gunfire continues to take the lives of nearly a dozen young people a day.

If we're going to make America the safest big country on earth, all of us have a responsibility to act. Congress has to do its part, by sending me common-sense gun legislation that: mandates child safety locks, closes the gun show loophole, bans the importation of large ammunition clips, and holds adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns.

My Administration is doing its part, by strengthening enforcement of our gun laws, supporting more after school programs, more mentoring, more conflict resolution and peer mediation. Last year, we helped launch the National Campaign Against Youth Violence. And, we established a new White House Youth Violence Council -- to coordinate the wide-ranging efforts of the federal government.

We're also working hard to ensure that all Americans are treated with dignity and that no American is victimized by violence because of their race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. That's why my Administration has fought to pass a strong hate crimes law, to promote diversity, and to end discrimination in the workforce. We must all recommit ourselves to respecting one another, to seeing our diversity as our greatest strength, and to recognizing the fundamental values that define us as One America.

But ultimately, this effort begins on the ground, and at the grassroots. You can reach out to troubled youth. You can help change a culture that too often glorifies violence and hate. You can talk to your children, teach them to resolve their conflicts peacefully, and raise them with the right values. I'm grateful because in Memphis, you are doing all these things. And there's no mission more important for our nation.

Your work in Memphis, and the work of the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, is a testament to the fundamental goodness of the American spirit, and it sets an example I hope cities across the land will follow. Thank you and God bless you.

the movies, and traveled through small towns in my state that still mark restrooms and water fountains White and Colored.

As a young boy in my grandfather's small grocery store, I learned lessons that nobody bothered to teach me in my segregated school. My grandfather had a 6th grade education from a tiny rural school. He never made a bit of money. But in that store, in the way he treated his customers, I learned America's most profound lessons: We really are all equal. We all have the right to be heard. And we really do have the right to be treated with the same level of dignity and respect.

2. Michael, Smiley Middle School, Denver, CO (African-American male, grade 7):

Q: "Is intolerance of diversity a big problem (priority) in this country?"

A:

While we have come a long way in our journey toward tolerance, we still have a long way to go. We've had terrible incidents in different parts of the country because of intolerance: because someone didn't like the color of someone else's skin or of someone else's religion. One of my priorities is to try to help the country become more tolerant.

That's why it is not enough to enter the new century the most technologically and economically advanced nation on earth. We must enter the new century with a renewed commitment and respect for the life and dignity of every human being – and continue to look for ways to end discrimination and hatred and promote acceptance and diversity.

3. Justin, Cherry Creek West Middle School, Littleton, CO (Indian male, grade 8):

Q: "Many times in middle school, people are left out by how they look or what they like to do. What do you think is the first step in eliminating prejudice in schools?"

A:

Though today we have more opportunities than ever, we still see evidence of bigotry – from our houses of worship to our nation's classrooms. But those who say we cannot transform the problem of prejudice into the promise of unity, forget how far we have come. We all must take steps to learn from and respect one another – to seek out those who are different from ourselves, and discover that they share many of the same values, opportunities and dreams. That means reaching out to people who dress differently, like different music, have different interests. Only then will our diversity enrich our lives, deepening our understanding of human nature and human difference, making our schools and communities more exciting, more enjoyable, more meaningful.

I'm glad I've had this opportunity to join you today, for it's your voices that will lead us into the next century. Keep talking to each other and, more importantly, keep listening.

>
>thanks, josh
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> (Embedded
> image moved Benjamin Berkowitz <bwb@sas.upenn.edu>
> to file: 07/12/2000 05:38:26 PM
> PIC31329.PCX)
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>Record Type: Record
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>To: Joshua S. Gottheimer/WHO/EOP
>

>cc:

>Subject: Re: Native American Packet
>
>
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>

>Josh,

>unfortunately, i am swamped with work in my bio class--i've got an exam on
>monday-- so i won't be able to make it to dc this weekend, however next
>weekend is a possibility.

>I'm going to mail you the three kearner report speeches i have tomorrow.

>In terms of hispanic stuff. I haven't been able to work on it this week

>because of lab work in bio. I have made some calls though and I think I

>know who we need to find speeches from and I think I can break it down into

>different time periods. I will get you a complete update on the hispanic

>stuff tomorrow, including the speeches that we have and the speeches that I

>am looking for. I feel confident that I can finish the hispanic stuff as

>soon as I get through this bio exam. If you like, I can send you the

>seventeen or so hispanic speeches that I already have and then just

>continue to send them to you as I get them. Two of the speeches may need to

>be excerpted.

>I'll email you tomorrow with more Hispanic info.

>Ben

>At 08:47 AM 7/12/2000 -0400, you wrote:

> >ben, got it, thanks.

> >what's going on w/ hispanics? are you almost done?

> >when can you get down here?

> >josh
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Very nice

Ben!

Josh

303/699-8254

We're more hopeful because of the way we cut taxes to help Americans meet the challenges of work and childrearing. This year alone our HOPE scholarship and lifelong learning tax credits will help 10 million families pay for college. Our earned-income tax credit will help 15 million families work their way into the middle class. Twenty-five million families will get a \$ 500 child tax credit. Our empowerment zone tax credits are bringing new business and new jobs to our hardest pressed communities, from the inner cities to Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to our Native American reservations. And the typical American family today is paying a lower share of its income in Federal income taxes than at any time during the past 35 years.

I've always believed that if you work hard and play by the rules, you ought to have a decent chance for yourself and for a better life for your children. That's the promise I made when I first ran for President, and that's the basic bargain behind so much of what we've done in the years since, from expanding the earned-income tax credit for lower income working people to passing the Family and Medical Leave Act, from increased child care assistance to health care for children to helping millions and millions of Americans move from welfare to work.

We're for letting families like you, whether you're in the 15 percent or in the 28 percent bracket, have a 28 percent deduction for the cost of college tuition, up to \$ 10,000 a year, and they're not for that. We're for it. We're for expanding the earned-income tax credit, for lower-income working people that have three or more kids, and they're not. We're for equal pay for equal work for working women, and they're not. We're for raising the minimum wage a buck over 2 years, and they're not. How can we not raise the minimum wage?

What about the economy? Well, I think it's important that we do more to bring the benefits of the economy to people and places that haven't fully participated. That's why I want to increase the earned-income tax credit, something you helped me do before -- lifted over a million Hispanics out of poverty in the years that I've been in office. That's why I think we ought to raise the minimum wage again.

We think -- I'll just say one other thing. I believe that one of the reasons America has done so well is that our prosperity has been broadly shared, that we've had over 22 million new jobs, that we've got the lowest minority unemployment rate among Hispanics and African-Americans ever recorded. We favor raising the minimum wage because we need it, and they don't. We favor dramatically increasing what's called the earned-income tax credit, which is an income tax refund to poor working people with children, especially those with three or more kids, and they don't.

We said we believe the purpose of social welfare is to bring the poor into the Nation's economic mainstream, not to maintain them independent. That idea turned into action through the expansion of the earned-income tax credit, the Vice President's empowerment zone program and welfare reform has given us the smallest welfare rolls in absolute numbers in 32 years, a 20-year low in the poverty rate, the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years while we fought and succeeded in maintaining health and nutrition benefits for poor children and increasing our investment in child care and transportation for lower income workers.

Since 1990, a great deal has been done. You know that in the Nation, we have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate since January of 1970, over 21 million new jobs. But the policies we put in place I think had a special impact in the Delta, especially the expansion of the earned-income tax credit and the efforts we've made that you heard Conn talk about to bring computers and access to the Internet to our schools and other public facilities throughout the Delta.

Now, in spite of all that, I still have offered a tax cut, and the Vice President has offered one, I think, in the campaign, in the same range. We could give people a \$ 3,000 tax credit for long-term care costs for their parents or disabled relatives; let people deduct the cost of college tuition for their kids, up to \$ 10,000 a year; increase the child care tax credit; increase the earned-income tax credit for lower income working people. Nobody who works for a living and has kids at home should be in poverty. The tax system ought to take them out. That's what I believe.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Waldman

364-4283

ROUTING SLIP

DATE: 10/3/00
 FROM: Stephanie Street
 Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Scheduling

File Accept

Comments _____

SUBJECT: Video for the live Court TV one-hour special
"Safe Passage: Voices from the Middle School."

Kris Balderston	—	Joe Lockhart	—
Elizabeth Cotham	—	Lisel Loy	—
Samuel Berger	—	Capricia Marshall	—
Sidney Blumenthal	—	Thurgood Marshall Jr.	—
Chuck Brain	—	Minyon Moore	—
Charles Burson	—	Bob Nash	—
Mary Beth Cahill	—	Beth Nolan	—
Maria Echaveste	—	John Podesta	—
Terry Edmonds	✓	Steve Ricchetti	—
George Frampton	—	Bruce Reed	—
Sarah Gegenheimer	✓	Rob Rosen	—
Laura Graham	✓	Rozensky/Valentino	✓
Nancy Hernreich	—	Kim Tilley	—
Mickey Ibarra	—	Gene Sperling	—
Ben Johnson	—	Carrie Street	✓
Joel Johnson	—	Karen Tramontano	—
Neal Lane	—	Loretta Ucelli	✓
Mark Lindsay	—	Melanne Verveer	—
Bruce Lindsey	—	Karen Kullman	✓

SCHEDULING PROPOSAL

TODAY'S DATE: 9/05/00

_____ ACCEPT

_____ REGRET

_____ PENDING

TO: Stephanie Streett
Assistant to the President
Director of Presidential Scheduling

FROM: Bruce Reed
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and
Director of the Domestic Policy Council

REQUEST: Question and answer video message for the live Court TV
one-hour special *Safe Passage: Voices from the Middle
School*.

PURPOSE: To highlight the President's support for the observance of
the Week Without Violence, a partnership between YWCA,
Court TV and the National Middle School Association.

BACKGROUND: The Court TV *Choices and Consequences* television special
Safe Passage: Voices from the Middle School is aimed to
help parents of middle school students, teachers and
community leaders understand the overall challenges young
people face as they make the transition from elementary
school to high school, and provides evidence of successful
efforts adults can make to assist teenagers build a strong
foundation for their high school years and beyond. The
special will partner with YWCA Week Without Violence,
an annual public education campaign that focuses on
practical and sustainable solutions to violence in our home,
schools, places of work, and communities.

Court TV's Catherine Crier and NBC's Today Show Host
Al Roker will facilitate a discussion among 25 middle-
school students about their personal insights and
experiences with the threat of gossip and ridicule, bullying
school safety, and the overall struggles they face growing
up in today's society. The program will be broadcast live
from Washington, D.C. on Court TV, WNBC and selected
NBC affiliates, and the viewership is expected to be

approximately 2,000,000 adults and adolescents nationwide. Copies of the program will also be distributed to 21,000 middle schools and more than 8,000 YWCA's in collaboration with a resource guide to be used in classrooms to facilitate dialogue and activities for middle school students in local communities.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION:	The President participated in the television special in 1999, which was conducted in the same format, and focused on teaching tolerance and diversity.
DATE AND TIME:	October 17, 2000 12:00 pm EST
BRIEFING TIME:	2 minutes
DURATION:	5 minutes
LOCATION:	The Capitol, Washington, D.C.
REMARKS REQUIRED:	Questions attached.
MEDIA COVERAGE:	Aired on Court TV, WNBC and selected NBC affiliates across the country.
RECOMMENDED BY:	Bruce Reed
CONTACT:	Karin Kullman X61732
ORIGIN OF THE PROPOSAL:	Court TV and the Department of Education
SOURCE OF PAYMENT:	Court TV

DRAFT Script for SAFE PASSAGE: VOICES FROM THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

To be broadcast by Court TV on Tuesday, October 17, at 12 noon

The following is for a taping we are requesting of the President: his responses to five questions which will be posed by individual middle grades students during a live broadcast. The President's responses will be taped into the program.

The tone: Last year the President chose to answer questions in a very personal way for a similar program whose theme was diversity in the middle grades. Although a script had been prepared, the President chose instead to respond spontaneously. As a result, the integration of his taped responses looked "almost live". The segment, which was a few minutes of the hour-long broadcast, came across as informal and appealing. It was clear the President was speaking from his heart and that he really understood this age group.

The questions below are intended to encourage speaking with this same tone. Many statistics will be supplied during the hour-long program, so we are not submitting that the President use any himself. And finally, because we are told we must submit responses to each question, I hope you will not think me presumptuous in submitting some responses that only the President himself would really know!

Questions:

1. How did you deal with bullying and name-calling when you were in middle school?

It was tough. It is very difficult to be the target of bullying and name-calling. It can make you very sad, and often angry. It certainly doesn't compliment the person who does the bullying or name-calling, either. When I was your age and someone called me a name or tried to bully me, sometimes I could ignore it, but I also had to learn to work my way through it without using fists or any other means of violence. Hurtful – and hateful – behavior is wrong, and sometimes emotions run high. But one of the important things we learn is how to manage our anger and find ways to turn anger and hurt into responses that are not violent.

2. Who helped you figure out how to resolve conflict when you were growing up?

[Here, the President should talk about a relative, teacher, clergy member, or other person or persons who helped him in this way.]

3. How are conflict resolution skills used in the everyday business of government? In solving disputes between nations?

Of course I would like to be in a situation where everyone agrees with everything I say or do, but the reality is that both work and life outside of work are full of challenges. I often work with people who don't agree with me, and with people who represent organizations and points of view that are different from each other. Right now a good example of getting through conflict is our attempt – those in Congress and me – to reach agreement regarding the next federal budget for people of our country. The money for that budget pays for so many things we depend on: social security for our older citizens and others, our national parks, money for many of our education programs and medical care, for example. But because I work in the best interest of all the people in our country, I am very mindful of how important it is to talk issues through, to negotiate and find common ground. This means that my staff and I do our homework – we make sure we have all the information we need to be able to listen intelligently and patiently, and reach a decision that may not be every single thing one side or the other first expected, but that will prevent a stalemate and still allow the people to be served well.

Leaders of countries must work in much the same way – because the goal is to make progress in serving the people as well as possible. Listening very carefully and having great patience, working a step at a time – keeping an eye on your best interests while recognizing that others are working in the best interests of their people – realizing that sometimes you have to give in a little because others will have to give in a little, too: these are the qualities leaders of nations have developed to solve disputes.

4. What can adults do to help young people find alternatives to violence?

Most adults have come through the time when their emotions are too high and their patience too low. They have come to understand that nothing is settled by turning to violence. They have the maturity and the experience to see the benefits of behaving without violence. Sometimes they can help one-on-one. A talk with one of your parents, a teacher, or a minister or rabbi, for example, can make a big difference. And then there are programs formed within your school, or within your community, such as the YMCA/YWCA and others, that can give young people help in turning away from violence and finding helpful ways to solve problems.

5. What's at stake if we do not address the issue of violence at the middle-school level?

Well, we know very well that when we see violence and negative behaviors in adults, often there were visible signs of hurtful behavior many years back. And

we know that as horrible as it is to be the target of hateful behavior, it is also horrible to be the instigator of negative behavior: of bullying or violence. Something that seems as simple as name-calling – if you get away with it – helps no one, and hurts everyone who is around it. Just think: learning to manage the urge to be hurtful means working responsibly to be direct, kind and clear in the way we talk and act with others. And that leads to building and maintaining good relationships and creating an atmosphere of respect. When there's a feeling of good communication and respect, you can accomplish anything!

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion With Students on Violence in Schools at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, April 22, 1999

The President. Thank you, Mr. Porter. I think all of you know that we are being joined by several million students through various media outlets that are covering this, and so let me begin by saying I'm delighted to be here at T.C. Williams High School. Thank you, Mr. Porter. Our superintendent, Herb Berg, is here, and I'm glad to be back in this school district again that has hosted me for so many important educational announcements.

Senator Robb and Congressman Jim Moran are both here with us, along with Mayor Kerry Donley. I thank them for joining us, and our two teachers, Ellen Harmon and Barbara Finney.

I want to spend most of my time today listening to you. I have a few questions I want to ask, and I'm going to turn it over to the teachers as soon as I make a few opening remarks. But I got up this morning, and I made some notes and worked over them again, and I'd like to say just a few things.

First of all, we're here, obviously, because of the terrible tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, and because, even though it is the worst example of school violence we've seen, it is by no means the only one. And indeed, I think that some of the people joining us today are from Paducah, Kentucky, and Jonesboro, Arkansas—at least those two communities which had examples of school violence last year.

I think it's important that all over America students and teachers have a chance to discuss their feelings about this, their ideas about what we should do, and it's especially important for younger children, who might be quite traumatized and wonder whether they are, in fact, safe at school. So I want to talk a little about all of that.

There is really nothing more important than keeping our schools safe. And we've tried to do a lot of things in that regard over the last few years, ^{win} ~~having a zero tolerance for guns and drugs policy, putting new community police officers in schools where they're needed, trying to support more~~ ^{p5} counselors in schools, more after-school, more mentoring programs, more conflict resolution programs. We've tried to help school districts and students and teachers, who wanted to do it, to have—for younger children, elementary and junior high school—using school uniform policies or dress code policies where they wanted to implement those things. But we know that there are things which have to be done sort of beyond the Government and beyond anything Government can do.

I spent a lot of time thinking about this, but I want to say, last night and today I thought about the work that my wife has done on this for many years, and I went back and reread the chapters in her book that deal with the problems that children have in coping with violence and the responsibilities of parents and the larger society. I thought about the work that the Vice President's wife, Tipper Gore, started doing well over a decade ago on this whole issue. And I think we have to ask ourselves some pretty hard questions here. What are the responsibilities of students themselves? What are the responsibilities of schools? What are the responsibilities of parents? What is the role of the larger culture here? Is there a sense in which the fact that all of you are exposed to much higher levels of violence through television, through video games, that you can actually figure out how to make bombs on the Internet—does that make a difference? Does it make these kinds of things more likely to happen? What are our responsibilities?

But before I open it to you, I'd just like to make one other comment. I think, particularly for young people who may be quite frightened as a result of this, or for parents who may wonder about the safety of schools, I think it's worth restating two or three basic things.

First of all, on balance, our schools are still the safest place our kids can be in most communities under most or all circumstances.

Secondly, I think it's worth reminding everyone that in spite of these horrible instances, our country is still fundamentally a good and decent place, and our people are good and decent people. And we have seen [p.692] the way the community of Littleton responded to this: people standing in line for hours to give blood, people showing up to volunteer their services as counselors and in other ways, with the way people have reached out to each other. We see a kind of microcosm of how America has reacted to this.

And I think it's important that the young people of our country know this and that the parents know this, that they should remember we—as horrible as this is, we have seen once again what is basically decent and good about America. And we should remember that most schools are more nearly represented by the kind of conversation we're having around here today than by the horrible incident we saw in Colorado.

So I think that's enough for me to say. But I'm interested in what you think about it, what your reactions are, what you've done here to try to avoid this, and what you think the responsibilities of the rest of us are, starting at home and going all the way up to the President, and also the cultural issues I mentioned.

You know, we have to acknowledge, as Hillary does in this book—and I went back and read some of the things we talked about over the last 20 years—that we do have more violence among younger people in America than other cultures do. And everyone has to take a hard look at what all the elements of our society are that contribute to that and what we can do to diminish it.

I also would like to say—let me just mention one other thing. I think it's important because of the action in which we're involved in Kosovo today. We don't know all the facts about what happened in Littleton, but one of the things that's come out of this that's really made an impression on me is that the young men who were involved in this horrible act apparently felt that they were subject to ridicule and ostracism, and they were kind of social outcasts at the school. But their reaction to it was to find someone else to look down on. And apparently, they were very prejudiced against African-Americans and Hispanics, and observed Adolf Hitler's birthday, and otherwise reacted to that.

This is something that you see a lot around the world and throughout human history, that people who themselves feel disrespected, instead of developing an enormous sympathy for other people who have been subject to discrimination, instead look for someone else to look down on so they can always say, "Well, I may be dissed at school, or I may be subject to disrespect in some other environment, but at least I'm not them."

And I think that's a larger problem we really have to fight, because you look around this room—of course, we're in perhaps the most diverse school district in America today—but this is a great opportunity for us, as long as we lift other people up and recognize the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals and all ethnic, religious, and cultural groups.

And so I think that's another point that needs to be made here: They had the wrong reaction to the fact that they were dissed. Hey, look, everybody gets dissed sometime in life, even the President—[laughter]—sometimes, especially the President.

So these are some of the things that I was thinking about that I hope will spark your thoughts. And I think I'll turn it back to you and to the teachers to discuss this in any way you'd like.

[Ellen Harmon, a teacher at T.C. Williams, opened the floor to the students for discussion.]

The President. Yes, pass the mike.

[Teacher Barbara Finney stated that she had a group of mediators at the school and introduced one. A veteran student mediator stated that the mediation program helped a lot of students and believed tragedy in Littleton grew out of a build up of anger or aggression that really should have been let out. Another student mediator described the mediation and conflict resolution process at T.C. Williams.]

The President. I wanted to ask this question, because I honestly believe that young people can help each other, particularly at this age, maybe more than adults can, maybe in some cases more than their parents can, if things get out of hand.

But what I want to ask you is, how do they get there, if they're really angry? What if they're too embarrassed about what they [p.693] think is being done to them to talk about it? Do they get there only when they come to you, or do other kids say, "Hey, these two people are having trouble," or "these two groups are having trouble. You need to go to them." Can you all talk to me about that?

[A participant said students may be referred to mediation or could approach the teacher in charge confidentially. She said the situation in Littleton, CO, appeared to have resulted from the build up of anger, and part of the process at T.C. Williams was to let the students vent their anger, which helped resolve the problem.]

The President. Go ahead.

[A student said the school had instituted a confidential safety hotline so students could reach the peer mediation people in the school and indicated that if something similar had been available in Littleton, the problem may have been prevented.]

The President. So you're saying if they had a hotline, as opposed to a peer mediation group, then someone who was afraid——

Student. No, they work together—they work together.

The President. That's what I mean. In addition to. So, if someone were afraid, they could call the hotline and say, "Here's what I think is going on."

Student. Yes. And it's confidential, you just——

The President. Okay. Suppose I call the hotline and say, "Listen, I just talked to one of these people, and they're talking about getting guns and shooting people." Then what happens? I called the hotline, here. What happens?

Student. Peer mediation can be contacted with that, because you have given us a name, or Mr. Porter can talk to them or something.

The President. I think this is good. That's wonderful.

Okay.

[A student, who is a peer mediator, said that classmates participating in mediation were able to speak openly without fear of punishment or judgment and that this allowed more openness, giving the students a broader perspective. Another student noted that perhaps part of the problem in Littleton was its school's lack of diversity as opposed to T.C. Williams which has so many different social, racial, and national groups that no one is left out. A third student stated that the administration and teachers at T.C. Williams did an excellent job resolving problems before they emerge.]

The President. First of all, I think that's a very brave thing for you to say. But there's no doubt that those people are very good people, that they have a good school, that they thought things were rocking along—which is why—that's why what you said, I think, is very important, that there needs to be some organized outlet that people can access privately. Because nearly everybody in America believes this couldn't happen in their school. So I think having this way to call and say, this is going on—we all need warning systems.

Go ahead.

Student. But, see, the problem is—what I feel is, I feel the administrators knew about this because a lot of people say, like, on the news and stuff, the students seemed to know about this crew already and seemed to not have done nothing about it. They didn't bother to prevent it, because they had a page in the yearbook for this crew and everything already.

The President. Yes, but the point I'm trying to make is that—a lot of people seemed to have known in general, but most people didn't—a lot of the people who knew, I think, didn't know that they might do what they did. And that's why it's important to feed all this stuff in someplace, because there are people who do know that—let me come back to the beginning here. I'd like for you all to talk about this.

Let me just say what I was going to say. One of the things that all kids are taught by their parents, you know, is this old "sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me." That ain't true—if you'll let me use bad grammar. [Laughter] That's not true, because a lot of this stuff starts with words, you know?

And even in what I do and the people I deal with, it's amazing how much energy is lost and how many things are not done for America because people in Washington, DC, at the highest levels of power and influence, (p.694) get hurt by what other people say about them—mean, bad things other people say about them. And then they get in the position where they try to bait each other to say mean, bad things, you know.

And I think that somehow, maybe we all—particularly in a culture that desensitizes people to violence, if they're profoundly alienated; and I still think that's a big part of this—all of us have to do a better job of teaching young people not to let themselves be defined by the words other people use against them.

That's something that really struck me when I read these accounts, is how alienated these young people were because these athletes were saying bad things about them or who else was saying bad things about them. They were different. So then, they had to look for somebody to feel bad about.

And that's why I like this peer mediation thing, because it tends to take the sting out of words at the earliest possible time. But people really still get hurt so badly by what is said about them. And somehow, we've got to make people more immune to that.

Go ahead.

[A student noted the two students in Littleton had bombs, which they may have learned to make with information from the Internet. He asked what the Government was going to do to prevent the dissemination of this information.]

The President. You know, when the bomb blew up in Oklahoma City and the Federal building was destroyed and all those people were killed, we pointed out that the way the Internet is going with these webpages, people can learn how to build bombs like that on the Internet. And there is a limit to how much we can control it. And we're looking for ways to try to at least help parents deal with what their children can get off the Internet, and a way to use ordinary law enforcement tactics effectively against people who are trying to do illegal things over the Internet. But it's very difficult.

I mean, one of the things that's wonderful about the Internet is kind of its capacity for infinite expansion. And that's one of the great things about it. I don't know how many teachers here now get research papers where all the sources are off the Internet. But it's great. That's the good news. The bad news is it's almost impossible to find this stuff, sort it out, and figure out whether it's illegal or not, and do something about it.

But I agree with you, it's going to be one of the big challenges we face, because there's been a lot of talk about—if you've seen in the last 3 or 4 days—about whether the Internet plus having very young people play very violent video games and where they learn to shoot people and stuff, that those two things have added an extra element to an otherwise already pretty violent culture. And I think we're going to have to take another look at it.

It's not easy. I don't want to pretend that it's easy. If you look at how many thousands and thousands of pages, webpages, are being added to the Internet every day, it's the fastest growing organism in human history for communications. And it presents us a great challenge.

[A student stated that it would be very hard for the Government to control the information on the Internet in a society with a free press and free speech. He believed the responsibility rested with parents and teachers to monitor what children access on the Internet.]

The President. Well, I do think it's important that in all these discussions, we not take the focus away from the home. I agree with that. If you look at all the facts that we know from the incidents that happened last year—all the school violence incidents—it appears that there were some cases in which the parents were—to go back to what you said about how other kids knew and they didn't call in—there appears that there were some cases in which the parents knew that the kid had a problem, including an obsession with guns and bombs, and there were other cases where they didn't know and might not have been able to know. But I do think that we shouldn't minimize that.

The only thing I want to—to go back to what you said about the Internet—I agree with that. You don't want me to choke off the Internet. It's one of the greatest things that ever happened. But we've got to figure out a way to apply the ordinary restrictions [p.695] of the criminal law in that context, just like you would any other. I think that's all you're saying, is we need to—if somebody's doing something illegal there, we should. But the problem is, how do you—how do parents limit their children's access to something they shouldn't be able to see? And I do think that the role of the Internet, and the way it's bringing everything into the home, has made a parent's job much more difficult. And it's harder to know what to do and how to do it. It's much, much harder. And I think we ought to just fess up to that.

But I'm sympathetic with you. We don't want to destroy what's great about the Internet. It's revolutionizing the American economy. It's opening up opportunities for people, opening up educational opportunities, bringing whole libraries to homes of people who could never afford them. I mean, it's doing a lot of good. But we've got to figure out a way to deal with these downside risks.

[A student stated that it appeared administrators and students in Littleton knew there was a problem, and thought administrators should have contacted the parents. Ms. Finney said she heard another Littleton student say on the news that he heard the suspects planning the attack last year and she believed he should have taken the initiative to tell someone.]

The President. I want to hear from the students, but that goes back to what you said. What I would like to—the message to go out across all the millions of students like you that are listening, and all of the schools, is that no matter how good your school is and no matter how good your programs are, we need a little humility here. And you're not doing something bad if you hear people talking about doing something or you see them becoming profoundly alienated in ways that could be destructive, if you tell someone who's in a position of responsibility to do something about it. They're not going to be punished if they hadn't done anything wrong, but we might be able to prevent more of these things.

I do think that one of the lessons that will come out of this incident, no matter what the facts turn out to be, is that there has to be a hotline, there has to be some sort of early warning system; there has to be a climate in which children feel, young people feel that they can ring the alarm bell when they see something like this.

[Another student introduced herself to the President.]

The President. Oh, yes, you've been waiting a long time—she's been waiting longer than anybody else. [Laughter]

[The student cited a lack of morality and urged more disciplinary action from school administrators.]

The President. I agree with that. But what happens if all of that still doesn't work because young people at some point develop a whole other life? I mean, when you look at what is apparently the fact here, these—they created a whole new culture for themselves, a whole other life, which—we don't know the facts yet about what their parents did or didn't know, about what the schools did or didn't know. I think it's important for us not to make hasty judgments about Littleton.

I agree with what you say. But I also think in addition to what you say, we've got to have some warning system to protect everybody else.

Go ahead.

[A student expressed his disagreement with the news media placing blame on movies and video games and said people should be spending more time with their children. Another participant said discipline should start at an early age, not in the teen years. Another student pointed out that blame often falls on high-crime areas but that Littleton is a white suburban area. She asked if this would take the focus off of racial groups being the cause of the problems.]

The President. Well, I hope so. You know, it's interesting; all of these instances of school violence, even though they occurred in schools which some had a lot of racial diversity, some had not much racial diversity, but they all occurred away from inner-city areas with very high unemployment and high general crime rates. They tended to occur more in small towns and rural areas or suburbs, [p.696] where you normally would not think that society itself falling apart around you would happen.

Now, part of that could be the absence of the kind of warning and alert systems that you often have in the big city schools. I mean, a lot of big city schools, for example, all routinely have metal detectors and things like that because they know they've got to protect their kids. But I think what it means is that whatever is out there in our culture, whether it is the failure of parents to teach their kids, whether it is that plus then the extra exposure to violent experiences when you're young, kind of one step removed through media or video games or whatever, whatever it is—what it shows is that the people in rural America and in suburban America, in low-crime America and upper income America are just as vulnerable to having alienated young people in gangs or in isolation take violent action. I think that's what it shows. And it should destroy any of our racial or economic stereotypes about this. This is something that can happen anywhere. That's the point you made, and I think that's right.

[A student stated having the hotline and peer mediators was great but noted that T.C. Williams also had social workers and psychologists, which offered students choices. He asked how many of the other schools in the country had these alternatives.]

The President. Well, the truth is that some do, and some don't. More and more, I think, schools are doing that. Some have economic constraints. Some may not think they need them. But I believe that—I can tell you this. One of the things I have tried to do is to make it possible for schools to have more trained personnel and more options to serve children that have a whole variety of different needs.

And I suspect that one positive thing that will come out of this awful incident is that schools all over America today will be doing an inventory of what kinds of supports they have for their children. And they will—I expect, just because we're doing this, your principal and your teachers will be flooded with inquiries over the next 2 weeks about what you have done here, about the peer mediation thing, about what kind of social workers you have, what kind of psychologist do you have, what kind of support do you have, because I think we will see everybody taking a serious look at this.

I'm glad you made that point, though, because there are people who have genuine emotional problems that require more professional, intense, longer term help than even the peer mediators can provide. So I think that's an important point you make.

[A student stated that other schools should have the alternatives offered at T.C. Williams so these things don't happen again and then asked the President when he or the Government was going to take immediate action for the other students in the country.]

The President. Well, first of all, you should know that we have provided, already, funds—last year—for a lot of these services for schools. And the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education put out a booklet that basically cited the best practices in all the schools.

We don't—the Federal Government doesn't run this high school. You know, you have a local school board, and most of the money comes from the State. We give some money, so—but what we did, we sent out a handbook, which basically had the best practices, for early warning signals, for preventive programs, for the kinds of things that you do here. And we've provided a lot of support to help schools to have the services they need to make them more safe.

Now, in the next few days I'm going to send another piece of legislation up to the Congress to do even more of this. But for it to work, people have to use the resources that are there and implement the systems that are there, and it has to be done in every school in the country.

Let me just say—this is kind of along the lines of your question—when I called the County Commissioner in Littleton, Colorado, the woman who is in charge of the local county government there, she was very, I thought, quite brave, considering it was in the middle of this crisis. The school hadn't even been—not all the children had been taken out yet. And she said, "Well, if this can happen here, it can happen anywhere, and maybe, finally, every school in America [p.697] will do what is necessary to try to prevent this."

So we have—last year we had the first White House conference in history on school safety. We have sent things to every school in America, and we have—and I said, I'm going to send another bill this week, or in the next few days, to do more. But it has to—every school has to realize that if you want to be safe you have to be prepared, just like you are here.

Yes.

[A student stated that parents, teachers, government, and students should work together to prevent school violence and provide for the common welfare of the community. Another student said students are often more in tune with other students and that having the opportunity to be an anonymous source of information, as was the case with the T.C. Williams hotline, was very important. Another student said the racism should stop, and everyone should feel they were part of a group. Another student stated that there were no guarantees against future violence and high school students all over America need to be more sensitive and considerate of one another, which would help eliminate animosity.]

The President. I must say, these things you say to me are among the most impressive things of all, because all of us want to be part of groups, and we are part of groups whether we like it or not. We're all part of groups. You know, we just—from the families we're born in and the lives we live. And the trick is to convince people that it's good to be part of a group, a racial, an ethnic, a religious, a cultural group, to be an athlete, to be a scholar, to be into music, to be into whatever. But it's not—it doesn't have to be negative when compared with someone else. That's the thing that breaks your heart.

And also, it's very important—another reason I like this hotline and I like what you said is that it's very hard to be 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 years old; and if you are very lonely and very alienated and you feel you don't belong with anybody or anything, and then all of a sudden, one or two other people come along, and they're just like you, and then you find something on the Internet that you can read that you can relate to, and then things begin to spin out of control. And I think what you said about reaching out to people who seem to be alone and have nobody to care about them. I think that's very, very important as well.

I think that you know it a lot better than I do. But as old as I am, I can still remember, it was—I had some pretty tough times when I was 13, 14, 15, 16 years old, and I had a very fortunate life. You realize how hard you have to work to keep from getting into patterns that will be destructive throughout life where people feel that they only count when they're in a group, that then they're opposed to somebody else, they can look down on somebody else. It is the curse of human society throughout the world.

Go ahead. You two, and then—this young man hasn't spoken yet, but go ahead. We'll get you the mike as soon as he is finished. Who wants to go next? Go ahead.

[A student said young people were more desensitized than they were 20 years ago and that the media needs to take some responsibility. She cited the popularity of violent movies as an example. She also stated that the value of human life had declined and that some of these violent students may not have understood the impact of what they had done.]

The President. Yes. Let me say this: I really respect all of you very much to have said that this is a matter of personal responsibility, family responsibility, and you don't want to blame the culture. I respect you for saying that—I don't want to blame the movies or blame the video games; what you've said and how you've talked with your mother and everything.

But I think you have to recognize—let me just say, for example, when I was your age, if anything, the racism was more pronounced, the social hierarchies in the schools were dramatic—between those who were in and those who were out—people fought regularly on the school grounds, and they were vicious to each other and—but you didn't have as much gun violence.

And I think it is unquestionable that more people have more access to more weapons, and more people at an earlier age can move [p.698] from profound alienation and misery into using violence against other than was the case 20 or 30 years ago, because they either have—they have more opportunities and because they've been desensitized and maybe because they don't have a chance to sit down with a mother or a father the way you do every night.

So the only thing I'm saying is, I think it's important not to oversimplify this. And I hate it when people blame someone else and don't take responsibility for what they did, but I don't think we can be blind to the fact that there are more opportunities and there is a greater openness to taking violent action on the part of alienated people today than there was 20 or 30 years ago.

And I think the experience that these children have before, maybe—maybe even when they're very young, before they form proper barriers in life about what's right, what's wrong, what can or can't be done, makes them quite vulnerable.

Go ahead. Who was next? This young man.

[A student expressed his concern for people who were into Gothic culture and rock music because he feared they would take the blame for instigating the situation in Littleton. He also expressed concern about being able to say things in school when angry, because when angry, people say things they would not otherwise say.]

The President. So how do you think we should deal with that?

[The student said that people should be more careful about what they say when they are angry, that there were healthier ways to deal with anger. He said the school provided counselors and psychologists for students to talk to when angry, but he was able to discuss his problems at home with his family.]

The President. Good for you. Let me say, just generally, I don't think—if all of you who have participated in this conflict resolution thing—maybe you've seen enough of this in other students to know this—but I can tell you from having lived a lot more years, this is a big problem later in life, too. Sometimes it's a bigger problem for men than for women because of the cultural sort of preconceptions of our society.

If you don't learn to talk about your feelings when you're young, and you don't have a constructive outlet for it, it just gets harder and harder and harder as you get older. And we're talking today about avoiding terrible tragedy. But we ought to talk just a minute about having a good life. You know, most people won't do anything really terrible, and most people will have some sort of life, but if you want to have a good life, you have to have some constructive outlet for your feelings.

And that's one thing that I really like about this whole way we're talking today. And I hope that it's something that will go out across the country and will change the way young people just live their lives. And I hope it's something you can take out of high school, because you'd be amazed how many people my age, in very responsible positions, still can't manage their anger because they never learned to have a constructive way to talk about it.

So this is not just—I mean, I know we're here to talk about this school violence, and I don't want to get off the subject, but I think that this is a general problem of life. And you have said a very important thing. And I hope that all of you will remember this, that it's not just something for high school. And to avoid having bad things happen, learning to manage your anger and to actually share how you really feel about something and get it behind you is one of the most important aspects of growing up. And you would be amazed how few people can really do it right.

[A student stated the need to take a look at how easy it was for the two Littleton students to get guns and expressed her belief in the need for regulation of weapons.]

The President. There is no other country in the world where it is so easy for people to get and misuse weapons. And we have a culture of having a right to own weapons and a right to use them and a big hunting culture, and I grew up in it, participated in it, and enjoyed it very much.

But I have—every little thing I've tried to do, from the passing of the Brady bill to the passing of the assault weapons ban, all these things have met with violent opposition, as [p.699] if I were trying to destroy the American way of life. And all I'm trying to do is keep more people alive.

And so I think that we need—we don't have, really, time to talk about this, because I want all of you to talk, but this will be a part of what we are trying to do, to strike a better, proper balance between making it harder for people who are violent to get guns and misuse them, without interfering with the constructive role that it plays in our society.

Go ahead. Oh, I'm sorry.

Ms. Harmon. I was just going to say, we're running a little short on time. Maybe we could take a few more questions. It's up to you.

The President. Yes. Go ahead.

[A student stated we are one of the most free countries in the world and that the easy answer to a dilemma like Littleton was to restrict freedom or rights—or mandatory uniforms and clear backpacks. He cautioned against raising security levels at the cost of freedom.]

The President. First, I think that's a point well taken. You mentioned school uniforms, let me tell you the position I took on that. I spent some time in Long Beach, California, which is the third biggest school district in California, which means it's huge. And it's the biggest school district that early introduced the school uniform policy, not applied to high schoolers for obvious reasons. But they did it in part because when the junior high schoolers had uniforms, which were basically just two-color outfits they wore every day, it distinguished them from the gangs, which created a safety problem. And it made all the kids safe.

But they found, interestingly enough, that kids from upper income as well as lower income families did better in those very troubling years where you're moving right into your teenage years. And it lowered dropouts; it increased attendance; it reduced discipline problems. It worked fine. What we tried to do was to say if the community decided they wanted to do it, then we would help them. And we've seen it happen a lot.

Now, my only question in this regard, in the order question you asked—and, again, I think it's very important that we not rush to judgment in Littleton. Those people are still grieving. They are still heartbroken. We do not have the facts there. It is very important that none of us make judgments about that now. But we can make judgments about how we want all schools to run.

But one of the things that struck me there was this whole black trenchcoat deal, and whether or not—if the hotline, if they'd had a hotline, and whether or not you had this kind of stuff there—whether the school administrators should have been able to say, "We're not going to have a school uniform policy, but we'll have a nonprovocative dress code policy." Is that too much of an infringement on individual liberty?

We can't answer that question. You've raised a good question. But let me just give you the other side of it. And you have to decide, in every case, whether it's an infringement on liberty or it's like going through a metal detector at an airport. I don't know how many times—before I became President, I was just traveling around like all the rest of us—how many times I went through a metal detector at an airport, and I set it off because of my belt buckle or the money clip in my pants or whatever, so I had to turn around, take it all out, go back in blah blah blah. Well, when all this started, people said, "Well, is this going to be an infringement on our liberty, right?" And then people saw planes hijacked and blown up, and they said, "Please infringe on my liberty a little bit"—[laughter]—so that no one felt—I say, nearly no one felt that it was an undue infringement on our liberty.

I'll give you another, maybe, what you think is a harder case, motorcycle helmet laws. You'll say, "I ought to have a right to split my head open if I want." But that's not entirely true, because if I hit you and you split your head open, and you wouldn't have if you'd had your helmet on, then I and society are supporting you, in a way.

So these questions—I am glad you made the point, but the point needs to be debated against the larger—the other large issue of individual freedom versus heading this stuff off. That's all I'm asking. And you might keep little models in your head about the importance of free speech, see, on the one hand, [p.700] and the airport metal detector on the other, and then whenever somebody comes up with a specific, argue it within that framework.

[A student stated that the First Lady knew what she was talking about in saying that it takes a whole village to raise children and that if everyone would just look out for everyone else's children, good things would happen.]

The President. I agree with that. Thank you. [Laughter] I think that's very important, that—one of you asked me what I was going to do. I think that the import of what everybody said, all of you said today, is that we all have responsibilities here. And that all these children are our children, and we all have responsibility.

Who's next?

Ms. Harmon. I'm sorry to have to say this, but the afternoon is drawing to a close here; students do have to move on. And we're delighted—

The President. You guys have got to get on the buses, right?

Ms. Harmon. Yes, coming up anyhow. We're very happy that all the students could participate today, and we're so glad that you shared your thoughts in the candid way that you did. So thank you very much. And especially thank you to President Clinton for coming here and sharing and listening to us as well. We're delighted to have you here.

The President. Let me just say this—I know we've got to sign off—first, you were terrific, and I thank you. I thank you for being honest. I thank you for being forthright. Second, in the next few days, as the agony of the grief fades in Colorado and as the facts tend to come out more, I think—I'm speaking not only to those of you who are here in this room, but the millions of children all across our country who are listening and the teachers and the educators—we are going to be working hard on this. And anyone who has more ideas for us needs to feel free to send them to us at the White House, and send them to the Secretary of Education.

We are working to reach out to the country. We want to do what we can to create more environments like this one and to do everything we can to minimize the chance that anything like this will happen again. And we want to, in the process, reassure the children and the parents of America that overwhelmingly our schools are good, safe places.

Thank you.

Note: The roundtable began at 12:45 p.m. in the media center. In his remarks, the President referred to John Porter, principal, T.C. Williams High School; Herb Berg, superintendent, Alexandria City schools; and Mayor Kerry Donley of Alexandria.

Source: United States. Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, April 23, 1999 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 35:691-700

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If there's anything I learned from that experience, it's that all of us – parents, teachers and students alike – must take bullying seriously. It interferes with a child's education and development, and often instills a sense of fear and insecurity in its victims. And the chances are that if you are being bullied, others in your school are also being bullied, too. No one should have to put up with it. But, if you are, tell someone who might be able to help you, like your parents, a teacher or even a counselor. Our Education of Department has a lot of info available for your teachers and counselors, to help them prevent bullying before it escalates into violence.

Only when everyone works together, can we put bullies where they belong -- in the principal's office.

2.. When I was in elementary school, all the teachers knew me and I had lots of people I could talk to. But my middle school is so big; none of the teachers seem to know me. Who can I talk to if I have a problem? *[This question allows the President to address school and classroom size, the importance of 'connectiveness' to school safety and to talk about the various resources in schools that kids may rely on.]*

I know from own childhood, that school can be an overwhelming and often intimidating place. You sometimes feel like you're just another face in the crowd. That's no surprise today, when there's now more students in America's schools than any other time in history. But, if you think about it, there's so many ways to make school a more intimate experience. I encourage all of you to take the time to speak with and get to know your teachers; ask them questions, and, when you build up the nerve, participate in class discussions. Believe me, it's worth it – I still to talk to some of my teachers when I really need advice. Outside the classroom, you might want to get involved in extracurricular activities, like the Spanish Club, the basketball team, or even the band. I know that's where I enjoyed some of my most memorable experiences.

Just remember, though it may not seem like it now, your school years will be some of your best years. Take advantage of them, get involved, and when you need to, reach out to friends, family, and teachers for support. No matter what the size, your school is a wonderful community that will keep giving to you for years to come.

3. We always hear about school violence on the news, and even though my middle school has put in metal detectors, my friends and I still worry about our safety. Are our schools as unsafe as the media makes them seem?

First and foremost, I want to reiterate that our schools are safe – and getting safer every day. But one incident of school violence is still one too many. That's why it's so important that you talk to your parents and teachers if you're troubled by a friend's behavior, or if you're upset yourself. Our administration has also worked to keep violence out of the classroom, with a zero tolerance policy for guns and drugs ... new community police officers in our schools ... more funds for after-school programs, and more support for counselors, mentoring, and conflict

Draft 10/05/00 6:00 pm

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR
MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
October 20, 2000**

Good evening. I am pleased to join the Make-A-Wish foundation in celebrating its 20 years of serving children with life-threatening illnesses and to congratulate you for the 80,000 wishes you've granted to young people around the world.

For the past eight years, I have been honored to take part in the important work you do. My experiences with Make-A-Wish children stand as some of the most moving and memorable of my time at the White House. I have been truly inspired by every child I have met.

Children like Yoni who came all the way from his home in Israel to meet with me – and who I saw again a year later when I traveled to his country. Children like Sharleen who came from California to our White House Easter Egg Roll and played me a beautiful song on her saxophone. And children like Fred Sanger who joined me for the lighting of our National Christmas tree.

I'm proud that Hillary and I have had so many opportunities to work with organizations like yours on behalf of America's children and children's health. Like you, I believe that children are America's greatest resource and our most precious gift. That's why your work is so important and why I will continue to support research efforts to prevent as many of these horrible illnesses as we can. That's my wish for America; to build a place where every child can live a full, happy and healthy life.

I thank the Make-A-Wish Foundation for giving help and hope to the thousands of children whose lives you have touched and for giving me the opportunity to contribute to your noble cause. God bless you.



Terry Edmonds
03/10/2000 07:17:01 PM

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Draft 03/10/00 7pm
Edmonds/Gottheimer

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
WASHINGTON, DC
MARCH 12, 2000**

Acknowledgements: Mayor Bob Knight, NLC President; Mayor Dennis Archer, NLC First Vice President; Mayor Karen Anderson, NLS Second Vice President; Don Borut, NLC Executive Director; Mickey Ibarra.

Good afternoon. Seven years ago, two months into my first term as President, I had the honor of addressing this group at a time of great uncertainty in our nation. Inflation was up, deficits were exploding, crime and unemployment were high, and citizens in towns and cities across our country were asking themselves, "America, What Went Wrong?"

For the past seven years, we have worked together to set things right. Vice President Gore and I came to Washington with a vision of making our nation a place where everyone responsible enough to work for it, could have a shot at the American Dream. With the help of all of you, we have made that vision a reality for millions of Americans. We turned the economy around with a new economic plan of fiscal discipline, expanded trade and investment in our people.

The results are clear: 20 million new jobs; the lowest unemployment rates in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest African American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record; the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. And with each passing day, we set a new record for the longest period of economic growth in our nation's history.

But in addition to building a new economy, we are also building a stronger American community. Crime is down by 20 percent to its lowest level in 25 years; teen births are down seven years in a row; and welfare rolls have been cut in half to their lowest levels in 30 years.

But everything cannot be measured in dollars and cents or statistics. Some things can only be measured in the heart. Building strong cities in the 21st century requires a greater understanding of the power and potential of America's growing diversity. It's about realizing that we're 99.9 percent the same; and that the most important fact of human existence is our common humanity. That's something you obviously understand with your call for cities and towns to take the lead in "undoing racism" in America. I want to applaud Mayor Knight for putting this at the top of his agenda for the year 2000. And I want to thank all of you for encouraging the people in your cities and towns to reach across the lines that divide us, to build that elusive One America.

I was reminded of how far we have come since the darkest days of segregation in America when I visited Selma, Alabama last Sunday. While we now have equal rights in public accommodations and voting, we all know, as Dr. King did 35 years ago, that we will never truly overcome until we bring economic opportunity and real hope to every corner of America.

That's why the Vice President and I have worked so hard to expand the winner's circle so that every American can benefit from our nation's growing prosperity. One of the most important ways to do that, in this year of the census, is to make sure we count every citizen in every community.

America's cities and towns are on the move. You are creating new businesses, new jobs, training workers, building and rehabilitation housing. The 135 empowerment zones and enterprise communities we have designated are now pumping the lifeblood of commerce and capital. Federal seed money has leveraged more than \$14 billion in public and private investment during the last five years alone. And we want to do even more.

The idea behind my New Markets Initiative is to give businesses the same incentives to invest in new markets -- from Appalachia ... to our inner cities of America -- that we give them to invest in poor countries overseas. In my budget, I have proposed tax credits and other incentives to spur \$22 billion in private-sector capital for this purpose.

My budget also makes unprecedented investments in the areas of our nation with the highest rates of poverty -- our Native American reservations and the Mississippi Delta. We want to make a \$110 million investment to promote economic development in the Delta, and a billion dollars to increase economic development, health care, education and law enforcement for our Native American communities.

We all know that opportunity in this new digital economy requires having access to a computer and knowing how to use it. That means we must close the digital divide between those who have the tools and those who don't. Next month, I will embark on another New Markets tour to close the digital divide and open opportunities for more of our people.

Education has always been the engine of opportunity in America. We need a 21st Century revolution in education, to make sure that all our children enter school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed. That means investing more in our schools, but demanding

more in return – with higher standards and greater accountability.

My budget puts education first, by continuing our commitment to hire 100,000 highly qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades. We also know that antiquated classrooms get in the way of learning. That's why my budget also calls for a new initiative to repair, renovate, and renew our nation's school buildings. And it includes, as it has in the past, a tax credit to help build or modernize 6,000 schools nationwide—so we can take our children out of trailers and put them in the modern classrooms they need to learn.

But we can't have strong schools and strong communities if citizens are living in fear of crime -- especially gun violence. While the crime rate has fallen, too many of our citizens are still living under the daily threat of gun violence. And too many of them are innocent children. When children as young as six years olds have their lives cut short by gun violence, we are simply not doing enough. It's time, once and for all, to take action. [Mayor Stanley], again, I want to extend my deepest sympathies to Kayla Rolland's family, to the students of Buell Elementary School, and to the entire Mount Morris Township community for the tragedy you have endured. For your sake, we must do all we can to make sure this never happens again anywhere in America.

Eight months after the shootings at Columbine, and countless other tragedies, Congress has still failed to do right by our children – and pass common-sense gun legislation. I have asked them to send me a bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks, bans the importation of ammunition clips, and holds adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns.

But Republicans continue to stand still -- and stand in the way of progress. Just this week, days after I met with the Congressional leadership, Republicans in the House threatened to undermine our gun buy-back program, which a growing number of you are using to take guns off the streets. Later in the week, Democratic members asked the Republican leadership to call a meeting of the conferees, to break the logjam and resolve outstanding differences on juvenile justice and gun safety legislation.

But once again, the gun lobby is cranking up the pressure on Congress, so that nothing gets done. Let me clear: eight months is long enough. There's no more time for delay. The conference committee should meet, work out their differences, and send me a good bill. We owe it to our children and to the victims to pass legislation by the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy on April 20th.

We still have a lot of work to do this year, and I know we can count on your leadership to get it done. America starts this new century on a very high note. And America's cities and towns are leading the way. One of the world's first mayors, Pericles, once said, "All things good of this earth flow from the city..." Good things are flowing from your cities, and if we work together and stay on the right path, you can lead America to even greater heights in the 21st Century.

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PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

STATEMENT ON CANCER

AND REMARKS ON THE BUDGET

THE EAST ROOM

October 21, 1998

- SENATOR TIM JEFFORDS
- Mayor Beverly D'NEILL - Long Beach CA

cc:

Josh Gottheimer

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

I am delighted to have the opportunity to join you here today. As you know, over the past few days I have been quite busy.

As we speak, the parties are at work on the Eastern Shore in the difficult struggle for peace. Peace demands hard choices – and those are the choices they are now called upon to make for their people and for the future.

I'm very glad to have this chance to join you this afternoon to recognize National Breast Cancer Awareness Month -- and to tell you about an important victory we have won for American families -- and for women's health.

Twenty five years ago, America declared war on cancer. Twenty five years from now, I hope that we will have won that war. Twenty five years from now, I hope that the war on cancer will have about as much meaning to school children as the War of 1812. Twenty five years from now, I hope those school children don't even know what the word "chemotherapy" means.

For nearly six years, our administration has worked hard to bring us closer than ever to that day. We have helped cancer patients to keep their health coverage when they change jobs. We have accelerated the approval of cancer drugs while maintaining safe standards. We have continually increased funding for cancer research. I appointed Dr. Jane Henney, the first woman and the first oncologist to be named Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. And I am pleased to report that within the last two hours, she was confirmed by the United States Senate.

Today, thanks to the efforts of so many people in this room and around the country, our progress is nothing short of stunning. We are closing in on the genetic causes of breast cancer, colon cancer, and prostate cancer, and testing medicines to prevent these cancers. New tools for screening and diagnosis are returning to many patients the promise of a long and healthy life. And from 1991 to 1995, cancer death rates actually dropped for the first time in history.

I am especially proud of the five years of progress we have made in the prevention, detection, and treatment of breast cancer. As many of you may know, I lost my mother to breast cancer just a few years ago, and not one day goes by when I don't think about her courage, and the courage of so many women facing this disease.

But you and I know that courage alone will not find a cure for this disease. Only a sustained commitment to breast cancer research will win that war once and for all. Without research, there would be no mammography. Without research, there would be no genetic testing for vulnerability to breast cancer. And without research, there would be no tamoxifen, which is showing so much promise in the treatment of breast cancer.

Just this afternoon, [I signed/the Senate passed] a fiscally responsible balanced budget with breakthrough funding for cancer research. I am very pleased that this new budget includes a record increase of \$400 Million in new support for the National Cancer Institute.

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With nearly \$3 billion in funding, NCI will now be able to fund critical new research, including a trial to expand the use of Herceptin [*her-septin*] to treat breast cancer earlier, and ten more new clinical trials for breast cancer treatment. This is an important victory for women's health. It is a balanced budget that honors our values.

In this as in so many things, let me salute and thank Vice President Gore, who spearheaded our drive to include this research funding in this budget.

Let me mention a few other ways that this budget strengthens our nation.

First and foremost, this balanced budget honors our duty of fiscal responsibility. We now have a budget surplus, the first in nearly three decades and the largest in history. And despite the temptation to spend that surplus on tax cuts or spending programs, this budget meets my challenge to set aside the surplus until we save Social Security.

And this budget will widen the circle of opportunity. By beginning to hire 100,000 new teachers, we will reduce class size, improve discipline, and make our classrooms a place for learning.

With thousands of tutors to help children to read, and up to 100,000 mentors to help poor children prepare for college ... with after-school programs to give 250,000 of our children someplace to learn instead of the streets ... with half a million summer jobs to teach our young people the discipline and joy of work ... this budget takes dramatic steps to invest in the next generation.

This budget strengthens our nation in other ways as well. It will bolster our prosperity at a time of financial turmoil around the world, by meeting our obligations to the IMF. It will strengthen protection of the environment, guaranteeing safer water, cleaner air, more pristine public lands. It will help struggling farmers who face natural disasters and declining export markets.

~~the resistance~~ ^{is fear of} We had to fight for each of these priorities ⁱⁿ despite ~~the resistance~~ ^{in front of} the congressional majority. We are still learning every day of wasteful spending tucked away in the pages of this budget. But all in all, this is a balanced budget that honors our values. It will strengthen our economy while it invests in our people. And it is good for America.

The victories in this budget must not obscure the fact that this has been a Congress too often marked not by progress but by partisanship. We shouldn't have to cram a year's worth of achievement in a 4000 page, 40 pound document.

Even in its last days, this Congress has persisted on the path of partisanship. The Congress has tied paying our United Nations dues to unrelated and controversial social provisions. These provisions endanger the health of women, and deny them even basic information about family planning -- even though studies show that countries where women have access to strong family planning have fewer abortions. I have made it clear many times that I would veto such provisions, and Congress sent me this bill knowing full well I would do so. Today, I have. And Congress should send me a clean bill to meet our obligations to the United Nations.

The 105th Congress leaves town with a great deal of unfinished business -- challenges that we must meet in the coming months and years to strengthen our families and our nation. We know what we must do; and we know how we must do it.

The next Congress must act on behalf of the health of our families by passing a bipartisan Patient's Bill of Rights. Our plan says to cancer patients and all Americans: You should have the right to a specialist such as an oncologist. You should not have to worry that you will have to change doctors in the middle of your cancer treatment.

VIDEO PROPOSAL

Date: Sept. 29, 2000

 ACCEPT

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✓ Stephanie Streett

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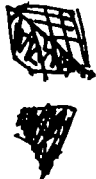
Mary Beth Cahill
Lauren Supina

LS by SP

REQUEST:

For the President to videotape a greeting to congratulate Women.com and The CBS Early Morning Show on their partnership that will be launched at a "live" concert event in celebration of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

PURPOSE:



- * To congratulate Women.com and The CBS Early Show on their partnership and their efforts to celebrate survival of breast cancer and recognition of recent medical advances during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month;
- * To amplify the Administration's continued commitment to increasing research and improving breast cancer policy; and
- * To remind the viewers through the President's own personal story that no family is exempt from the tragedy of losing a mother, a sister, a wife or a daughter to this deadly disease.

BACKGROUND:

This concert will be broadcast LIVE on The CBS Early Show, with key elements mirrored on the Women.com internet site, from the decks of the cruise liner *Explorer* – on donation from Royal Caribbean – as it sails down the New York Harbor. The event will be a celebration National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, breast cancer survival and recognition of recent medical advances made, as well as a reminder that there is still much work to be done. CBS has a request before the Parks Department now to allow Lady Liberty herself to wear a pink ribbon in honor of the event. Donations from sponsors generated by the broadcast will be made to a prominent breast cancer charity TBD.

The event will feature celebrity singers and performers who are committed to this cause, a 3-D animated self-examination model on-line to instruct women how to perform this life-saving procedure in the privacy of their own home, and videotaped testimonials from private citizens whose families have been forever changed by the presence of this most uncompromising disease. They feel strongly that the President's honoring and sharing of his mother's fight with breast cancer will do much to remind

their audience that no family is exempt from the tragedy of losing the women we hold most dear – be it mother, sister, wife or daughter.

SOURCE OF PAYMENT:

Women.com Networks
Contact: Mark Carter
San Matao, CA
Ph. 917-628-2007

DATE AIRING/ SHOWING:

Wednesday, October 18, 2000.

DURATION:

2 minutes.

SCRIPT ATTACHED:

Yes; several versions, with and without reference to Virginia Clinton Kelley.

STAFF CONTACT:

Sondra Seba, ph. 6-7310.

ORIGIN OF PROPOSAL:

Letter from Mark Carter, Vice President Television & Broadband, Women.com Networks.

**PROPOSED STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON BREAST CANCER FOR
CBS NEWS "THE EARLY SHOW" AND WOMEN.COM**

**VERSION A: HISTORY AND PERSONAL STORIES ABOUT VIRGINIA CLINTON
KELLEY**

Today, most of us know someone – either a loved one, or a dear friend -- who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. For me, that person is my mother, Virginia Clinton Kelley.

It was from my mother that I got my fighting spirit. Throughout my political career, she was one of my most ardent campaigners – often staying up late into the night to address envelopes. She was an American original, the world's greatest optimist. She taught me that setbacks aren't permanent, and when faced with personal tragedy of all kinds, she taught me to accept what came my way, and to keep on going. She was a survivor.

But in 1994, still a vibrant woman living an active life, she died of a recurrence.

It is estimated that one out of every eight or nine women will encounter this devastating disease at some point in their lives. About 77% of these cases occur in women over the age of 50. These statistics are frightening. Yet, experts tell us the only way we will beat breast cancer – is to confront our fear of it.

The way to do that is to be proactive about health care. This is important not just for the women who are at risk, but also for the men and children who love them.

We know that early detection through mammography, self-examination and a good relationship with ones doctor -- *saves lives*. When breast cancer is detected at an early stage, the chances of survival are nearly 95%. In part, through the efforts of this administration and those before me -- we are living in the Golden Age of Oncology. There are more new drugs and effective treatments for breast cancer now than ever before. Still, there is much work to be done. We need to increase the rates of survival amongst breast cancer patients, and we need to continue to develop new medicines to treat the disease successfully while continuing to enhance their quality of life.

My mother, Virginia Clinton Kelley was "filled with the very essence of life. She was a *celebration on the way to heaven*." I'd like to think, with my mother's optimism, that breast cancer will one day be a thing of the past. In the meantime, may all of us celebrate each moment on earth as fully as she did by being vigilant about health care; by being thankful for the mothers, the sisters, the wives, and the daughters we have; and by sending hope to those who are presently battling this disease. They need your support.

**PROPOSED STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON BREAST CANCER FOR
CBS NEWS "THE EARLY SHOW" AND WOMEN.COM**

VERSION B: NO REFERENCE TO VIRGINIA CLINTON KELLY

Today, most of us know someone – either a loved one, or a dear friend -- who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

It is estimated that one out of every eight or nine women will encounter this devastating disease at some point in their lives. About 77% of these cases occur in women over the age of 50. As yet, there are no easy methods for preventing breast cancer, or curing it. These statistics are frightening. Yet, experts tell us the only way we will beat breast cancer – is to confront our fear of it.

The way to do that is to be proactive about health care. This is important not just for the women who are at risk, but also for the men and children who love them.

We know that early detection through mammography, self-examination and a good relationship with ones doctor -- *saves lives*. When breast cancer is detected at an early stage, the chances of survival are nearly 95%. In part, through the efforts of this administration and those before me -- we are living in the Golden Age of Oncology. There are more new drugs and effective treatments for breast cancer now than ever before. Still, there is much work to be done. We need to increase the rates of survival amongst breast cancer patients, and we need to continue to develop new medicines that treat the disease successfully while continuing to enhance their quality of life.

We all pray that breast cancer will one day be a thing of the past. In the meantime, may all of us be vigilant about health care; be thankful for the mothers, the sisters, the wives, and the daughters we have; and send hope to those who are presently battling this disease. They need your support.

**PROPOSED STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON BREAST CANCER FOR
CBS NEWS "THE EARLY SHOW" AND WOMEN.COM**

VERSION C: HISTORY ONLY OF VIRGINIA CLINTON KELLEY

Today, most of us know someone -- either a loved one, or a dear friend -- who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. For me, that person is my mother, Virginia Clinton Kelley. For four long and difficult years -- she battled the disease valiantly. She was a survivor.

But in 1994, still a vibrant woman living an active life, she died of a recurrence.

It is estimated that one out of every eight or nine women will encounter this devastating disease at some point in their lives. About 77% of these cases occur in women over the age of 50. These statistics are frightening. Yet, experts tell us the only way we will beat breast cancer -- is to confront our fear of it.

The way to do that is to be proactive about health care. This is important not just for the women who are at risk, but also for the men and children who love them.

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We all pray that breast cancer will one day be a thing of the past. In the meantime, may all of us celebrate each moment on earth as fully as my mother did by being vigilant about health care; by being thankful for the mothers, the sisters, the wives, and the daughters we have; and by sending hope to those who are presently battling this disease. They need your support.

women.com networks

Ms. Lauren Supina
Women's Office of Initiatives and Outreach
Old Executive Office Building
Room 15
Washington, D.C. 20502
Attn: Angela Blake

September 26, 2000

Dear Lauren Supina,

On October 18, 2000 Women.com will launch its partnership with The CBS Early Show with a concert in celebration of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The concert will be broadcast live from the decks of the cruise liner, *Explorer* -- on donation from Royal Caribbean -- as it sails down the New York Harbor. CBS has a request before the Parks Department to allow Lady Liberty herself to wear a pink ribbon in honor of the event!

Women.com was established in 1994 and with 7.1 million people visiting our website each month we are one of the top 30 web sites in the world. The CBS Early Show has a daily audience of 2-3 million. The concert will air on TV with key elements mirrored on our Internet site.

The event will feature celebrity singers and performers who are committed to this cause. The event will also feature a 3-D animated self-examination model on line, to instruct women how to perform this life saving procedure in the privacy of their own home. The show will also include videotaped testimonials from private citizens whose families have been forever changed by the presence of this most uncompromising disease.

We would like to invite the President to take part in a short, pre-taped interview in honor and in memory of his mother, Virginia Kelly. We are certain that this personal story from the leader of the free world, more than anyone else, will do much to remind our audience that no family is exempt from the tragedy of losing the women we hold most dear, be it mother, sister, wife, or daughter. Although our program will be a celebration of survival and recognition of recent medical advances made, it is also a reminder that there is still much work to be done. We sincerely hope that the President will be able to spare a few minutes from his schedule to meet with us in the upcoming weeks.

Donations from sponsors generated by the broadcast will be made to a prominent breast cancer charity to be announced.

Headquarters

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Fax 650.378.6590

417 Fifth Avenue
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212.683.4333
Fax 212.683.3335

Airport

140 Elm Street
New Canaan, CT 06840
Tel 203.906.5811
Fax 203.972.1848

We thank you for considering this request and look forward to your decision. If you have any further questions I can be reached at 917.628.2007 and, of course, at my email address: mcarter@women.com.

Sincerely,



Mark Carter

Vice President Television & Broadband
Women.com Networks

Headquarters

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 19, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON EDUCATION

The South Lawn

8:40 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. I'm delighted to be joined this morning by the Secretary of Education and by my Domestic Policy Advisor Bruce Reed to discuss the very important issue of our children's schools.

In my State of the Union address this year, I said that in order to meet our responsibility to create 21st century schools for all our children, we have to do a far, far better job of spending the \$15 billion in federal aid we send to our schools every year.

Building these kinds of schools has been a passion for me, for the Vice President, for Secretary Riley, for our entire administration. We have worked with members of Congress and education leaders, people in every state of the country, for over six years now. We have supported higher standards, better teachers, new technology, modern facilities, innovations like charter schools, character education, school uniforms.

But we know fundamentally that if we are going to change the way our schools work, we must change the way we invest federal aid in our schools.

On the way down here, just down the walk, the Secretary of Education said we have been working very hard to promote school standards around the country; now we have to get the standards actually into the schools. This week I am sending legislation to the Congress designed to do just that.

First, this legislation strengthens accountability for results. It says that states and school districts that choose to accept federal aid must take responsibility for turning around failing schools, or shutting them down. It says they must give parents report cards not just on their children, but on the children's schools. It says school districts must have strong discipline codes that are fair, consistent, and focused on prevention. It says they must make sure that teachers actually know the subjects they are teaching. It says they must stop the practice of social promotion, not by holding students back, but by making sure they have the support to meet the higher standards.

This legislation triples funding for after-school and summer school programs, provides for smaller classes, and requires other early interventions that lift students up.

Second, this legislation will put more highly-trained teachers in our nation's schools. It requires that all new teachers pass subject matter and skills tests, that all teachers be given the support they need to improve their knowledge and skills. It allows Congress to finish the job we started last fall of hiring 100,000 new,

highly-trained teachers to reduce class size in the early grades.

Finally, the legislation will help give all our children safe, healthy and disciplined learning environments. For the first time, it will require schools to adopt comprehensive school safety plans, use proven anti-drug and anti-violence prevention programs, intervene with troubled youth, establish security procedures for schools, and give parents an annual report of drug and violent incidents at their children's schools.

It also expands the character education efforts the Secretary of Education has done so much to advance, promotes alternative schools for disruptive students, and strengthens our policy of zero tolerance for guns by requiring that any student expelled for bringing a gun to school receive appropriate treatment and counseling before being allowed back into class.

As I said yesterday, we must do everything we can to keep guns out of the hands of our children. I want to commend the Senate for yesterday's overwhelming, bipartisan support for child safety locks. And I commend Speaker Hastert for his leadership in supporting background checks at gun shows, and for raising the age of handgun ownership to 21. I urge the Senate to keep working on the Justice bill, the Juvenile Justice bill, and to bring these common-sense measures to a vote.

Now, these education ideas are not Democratic or Republican, nor were they dreamed up in Washington. They were invented and proven successful in the laboratories of democracy at the school, city and state levels. They preserve and enhance the flexibility that states and districts need to run successful schools. If the federal government fails to act, the best of these practices will spread, but much more slowly. Just remember, it took 100 years for laws mandating universal education to spread from a few states to every state. That pace of change might have been all right in the 19th century; it won't do in the 21st century. We do not have the luxury of waiting and continuing to subsidize failure.

Nothing we can do will more surely unite our people and strengthen our nation than giving all of our children a high-quality education. We know what works -- our schools, our educators have shown us what works. It is time to put that as a condition of success in the investment of federal aid in every child in America. And I want to thank the Secretary of Education and Mr. Reed and everyone else who has worked on this program.

Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, on the Balkans, can we ask you a question about the Balkans?

Q Do you like the peace proposal by Talbott -- that Talbott is taking to Moscow? What do you think of it?

END

8:45 A.M. EDT

Draft 5/1/00 6:45pm

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5-2-00

Lowell Weiss



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PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

REMARKS AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

ON TEENAGERS

THE WHITE HOUSE

May 2, 2000

CC:
Speechwriting

by for ASD. for under

Acknowledge: Mrs. Clinton; ~~Sec. Shalala~~ ⁵⁻²⁻⁰⁰; Sec. Herman;
Sec. Shalala; ~~AG Holder~~; ~~Chairman~~
~~Herman~~; CNS CEO Wofford; Director Lachance; Deputy
Dir. of ONDCP Donald Vereen; Rep. Stephanie Tubbs
Jones; Dr. David Hamburg, President Emeritus of the
Carnegie Corporation. Back in the late '80s, I had an
opportunity to work closely with Dr. Hamburg on
Carnegie's landmark "Turning Points" report, which helped
educators to see new ways in which they could better meet
the developmental needs of young adolescents.

Cheryl (Grand) Y

PANEL 1 — Dr. JACQUELINE ECCLES ~~_____~~ KAREN PITTMAN ^{W/ Rytter}
Dr. JAY GIEED ~~_____~~ RHEA PERLMAN / DANNY DEVITO ^{Sign}

When you boil it all down, there is one belief I brought
with me to this job that underlies my approach to nearly
every important issue — whether it's strengthening our
economy or improving our schools, expanding quality
health care or building One America.

It is my fundamental belief that within every single child there is a brilliant spark of possibility – and that this society, this American village, has no greater obligation than to kindle that spark in every way it can. Today, we are here to focus on kindling that spark in the teenage years – a time of rapid growth and exploration, challenge and change.

The fact is, every time I welcome young people here to the White House for events like this, I can't help but think back to the day I first came here as a teenager and had a chance to shake President Kennedy's hand. I know that with the right inspiration, preparation, and love, so many of the young people I have met will go on to do amazing things. One might discover the cure for cancer. One might lead the first human mission to Mars. One might become President of the United States.

Unfortunately, much of what we read about teenagers these days does not focus on this remarkable promise. It focuses on problems: Teenagers losing their way. Teenagers turning inward. Teenagers acting out in violence.

So I believe that one of the most valuable things we can do today is to take a balanced look at the life of teenagers today. And to that end, we asked the Council of Economic Advisers to prepare a statistical portrait of America's teens.

The good news is that teenagers today live far healthier, more prosperous and promising lives than ever before.

The economic rewards of education are at an all-time high, and teens have responded by completing high school and enrolling in college at record rates. More teenagers are giving back to their communities through volunteer service. Many harmful behaviors among teens are on the decline – including youth violence, homicide, suicide, teenage pregnancy, and, very recently, drug use.

The report also highlights the areas where we simply must improve. There are still significant opportunity gaps that separate white students from students of color. Teen smoking, drug use, and pregnancy are still far too high. And despite a marked decline in teen homicide over the past few years, there are still far too many communities being scarred by youth gun violence.

Not surprisingly, the CEA found that gun-related teen deaths – from deliberate acts as well as accidents – are highly correlated with gun ownership rates. In states with fewer guns, there are fewer teen deaths. That is a key finding I hope no one will overlook.

Perhaps the most empowering finding in this new report is the extent to which parents have the opportunity to guide their teenagers on the right path. In fact, just sitting down to dinner with your children can have an enormously positive impact. The report found that teenagers who had dinner with parents five nights a week are far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide, and drugs. And this holds true for single-parent families as well as two-parent families, across all income and racial groups.

For the past seven years, the First Lady, the Vice President, and I have worked hard to complement parents' efforts to raise healthy, hopeful, and responsible children. The very first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act. This law has now given more than 20 million Americans the opportunity to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave without fear of losing their jobs – and we want to expand it even more.

We've worked to turn teenagers away from risks to their health and future – by cutting the rate of drug use with powerful anti-drug messages, by standing up to the tobacco industry, and by making the single largest investment in children's health care since 1965.

We've worked to make schools stronger and safer. My new budget would help modernize and rebuild 6,000 public schools and help reinvent high schools on a smaller scale to make them more responsive to student needs. It would also greatly increase funding for our Safe School Initiative, which unites principals, parents, police, and others in the community in designing comprehensive strategies to stem violence in and out of school. And it would greatly expand quality after-school programs, to give teenagers a safe place to learn in the hours before their parents get home from work.

We created AmeriCorps, which has now given more than 150,000 young people a chance to earn money for college while serving their communities. In the process, we've come to see that national service is one of the most powerful antidotes to the alienation and isolation that so many young people feel. When young people join AmeriCorps, they become an essential part of a team. They join a culture where teens turn to action, not anger ... where they are trained to find everyone's strengths, including their own. That's one big reason why the Council of Economic Advisers' found that teens who participated in service projects were 75% less likely to drop out of school.

*Ambrose 187
Covey 187*

We're working with industry to give parents the tools to protect their children in the New Media Age – from the V-chip to Internet filtering technologies to voluntary ratings for TV programs and video and Internet games. The next step is clear: As the First Lady said, we must have a single voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment that is easier to enforce and easier for parents to understand.

Today, I am pleased to announce two other important ways we can help parents and their teenagers. First, I am signing an Executive Order that prohibits discrimination against parents in the federal workforce. It is clear that some employers are reluctant to hire or promote employees who have children at home. Some of you may have experienced this yourselves.

The goal of this Executive Order is to say to all employers:
Don't put up glass ceilings for parents. A parent's job is
tough enough.

Second, I am pleased to announce that the National
Campaign Against Youth Violence, the National Campaign
to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and Tobacco Free Kids, and the
federal government have teamed up to produce a
comprehensive guide to help parents support their teenagers
through this crucial developmental period.

I wish I could spend the rest of the day with you, but
unfortunately I cannot. Before I depart, I have the honor of
introducing and hearing our keynote speaker: Ben Casey,
the President of the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas.

Mr. Casey, who holds degrees in psychology and counseling from UCLA and Chapman College, currently oversees 145 program centers that serve a quarter of all families in the Greater Dallas region. We've asked him to speak to us today about his extensive experience with teens and the Y's new poll, which has some important findings about the way teens and parents view their communication and time together. Mr. Ben Casey...

[After Ben Casey speaks, you will say a brief closing word and depart.]

#

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS AT WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON TEENS
THE WHITE HOUSE
May 2, 2000

Acknowledge: Mrs. Clinton; Cabinet TK; Members TK; all the families, leaders, and researchers here today; My good friend Dr. David Hamburg, President Emeritus of the Carnegie Corporation. Back in the late '80s, I had an opportunity to work closely with Dr. Hamburg on Carnegie's landmark "Turning Points" report, which helped educators to see new ways in which they could better meet the developmental needs of young adolescents.

One of the great joys of my job is welcoming young people here to the White House for events like this. And every time I do, I can't help but think back to the day I first came here in 1963, and I had a chance to shake President Kennedy's hand. I know that with the right inspiration, preparation, and love, so many of the young people I have met will go on to do amazing things. One might invent the cure for cancer. One might lead the first human mission to Mars. One might become President of the United States.

Unfortunately, much of what we read about teenagers these days does not focus on this remarkable promise. It focuses on problems: Teenagers losing their way. Teenagers turning inward. Teenagers acting out in violence.

So I believe that one of the most valuable things we can do today is to take a balanced look at the life of teenagers today. And to that end, we asked the Council of Economic Advisers to prepare a statistical portrait of America's teens. The good news is that teenagers today live far healthier, more prosperous and promising lives than ever before. The economic rewards of education are at an all-time high, and teens have responded by completing high school and enrolling in college at record rates. More teenagers are giving back to their communities through volunteer service. Many harmful behaviors among teens are on the decline – including youth violence, homicide, suicide, teenage pregnancy, and, very recently, drug use.

Perhaps the most significant and empowering finding in this new report is the extent to which parents have the opportunity to guide their children on the right path in the teenage years. In fact, just sitting down to dinner with your children can have an enormously positive impact. The report found that teenagers who had dinner with parents five nights a week are far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide, and drugs. And this holds true for single-parent families as well as two-parent families, across all income and racial groups.

Of course, as a society, we still have a long way to go if we want to give all our young people the future they deserve. Smoking, drug use, and teen pregnancy are still far too high. There are still significant opportunity gaps that separate white students from students of color. And despite a marked decline in teen homicides and suicides over the past few years, far too many of our communities have been scarred forever by disturbed teenagers with easy access to guns. The CEA found that gun-related teen deaths – from accidents and deliberate acts – are highly correlated with gun ownership. In states with fewer guns, there are fewer teen deaths. That is a key finding I hope no one will overlook.

For the past seven years, the First Lady, the Vice President, and I have worked hard to complement parents' efforts to raise healthy, hopeful, and responsible children. The very first bill I signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act. This law has now given more than 20 million Americans the opportunity to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave without fear of losing their jobs – and we want to expand it even more.

We've worked to turn teenagers away from risks to their health and future. We've cut the rate of drug use with powerful anti-drug messages in every community. We've taken unprecedented action to force the tobacco industry to stop marketing their deadly products to teens. [*check with Bruce*] And with our Children's Health Insurance Program, we made the single largest investment in children's health care since 1965.

We've worked to make schools stronger and safer. My new budget would help modernize and rebuild up to 6,000 public schools and reinvent high schools on a smaller scale to make them more responsive to student needs. It would also greatly increase funding for programs aimed at preventing youth violence – like our Safe School Initiative, which unites principals, parents, police, and others in the community in designing comprehensive strategies to stem violence in and out of school.

We've greatly expanded quality after-school programs, to give teenagers a safe and constructive place to go in the hours before their parents get home from work. This year, the Vice President and I have proposed to create after-school and summer-school opportunities for every child in every failing school in America. And I want to thank Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman for all of their work to expand after-school opportunities.

We created AmeriCorps, which has now given more than 100,000 young people a chance to earn money for college while serving their communities. And in the process, we've come to see that community service is one of the most powerful antidotes to the alienation and isolation that so many young people feel. In fact, if you read the Council of Economic Advisers' report, you'll see that teens who participated in community service were 50% less likely to drop out of school.

As the First Lady said, we're working with industry to give parents the tools to protect their children in the New Media Age – from the V-chip to Internet filtering technologies to voluntary ratings for TV programs and video and Internet games. The next step is clear: We must have a single voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment that is easier to enforce and easier for parents to understand.

Today, I am pleased to announce two new ways we can help parents and their teenagers. First, I am signing an Executive Order that prohibits discrimination against parents in the federal workforce. It is clear that some employers are reluctant to hire or promote employees who have children at home. Some of you may have experienced this yourselves. The goal of this Executive Order is to say to all employers: Don't put up glass ceilings for parents. A parent's job is tough enough.

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I wish I had a chance to spend the rest of the day with you, but unfortunately I cannot. Before I depart, I have the honor of introducing our keynote speaker: Ben Casey, the President of the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas. Mr. Casey, who holds degrees in psychology and counseling from UCLA and Chapman College, currently oversees 145 program centers that serve a quarter of all families in the Greater Dallas region. We've asked him to speak to us today about his extensive experience with teens and the Y's new poll, which has some important findings about the way teens and parents view their communication and time together.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Columbus, Ohio)

For Immediate Release

May 4, 2000

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ROUNDTABLE ON REFORMING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

Eastgate Elementary School
Columbus, Ohio

4:40 P.M. EDT

MS. BLAKE: Good afternoon. My name is Barbara Blake, and I'm the principal here at Eastgate Elementary School.

We're very proud to host this event on behalf of the Columbus Public Schools. Like many other schools in this district, we have raised test scores dramatically over the last two years. Here are but two examples.

Two years ago, 10 percent of our 4th graders passed the reading proficiency test; last year, 45 percent passed. (Applause.) Two years ago, 10 percent of our 4th graders passed the math proficiency test; last year, 30 percent. (Applause.) Two years ago, 10 percent of our 4th graders passed the science proficiency test; last year, 33 percent. (Applause.)

We have accomplished this turnaround through good, old-fashioned hard work. It is hard work through solid programs like our research based reading program, direct instruction; we spend 180 minutes per day for reading; through our federal class size reduction program that allows for smaller classrooms; and after-school programs; tutoring programs.

I'm pleased to be part of a district that is focused on children and academic successes, as we are here in Columbus, Ohio. I am pleased to host this conversation here today on behalf of my colleagues throughout the district.

I first became aware of President Clinton and his educational reform programs while he was the governor of Arkansas. At that time, I wrote the governor and asked him for information on his proposed school reforms. I'm glad to report that he did send the information, as requested. (Laughter and applause.)

He has followed through with his beliefs about educational reform. President Clinton is truly a crusader for education. He is an advocate for education and he has made educating America's children his priority.

Eastgate Elementary School and many other schools in the district has benefitted from the resources he has made available to us, that help us do our work in the classroom on a daily basis. We are grateful for his leadership and for the time he has taken today to help our community to understand the work of educating our nation's children.

President Clinton is the leader of the free world, Commander in Chief of all our armed forces of the United States, the highest ranking public official of our country, and a crusader for education.

I present to you the President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ms. Blake. I guess I should begin by saying I'm certainly glad I answered that letter -- (laughter) -- so many years ago. I want to thank you of welcoming me here. And thank you, Mayor Coleman, for your leadership and for welcoming me also. Thank you, Superintendent Rosa Smith; Representative Beatty; City Council President Javas; House Minority Leader Ford.

I'd like to thank the leaders of the Columbus and Ohio Education Association, John Grossman and Gary Allen, who are here. And I'd like to thank all of our panelists who are here.

I have been on a tour these last two days to highlight the good things that are happening in education in America; to highlight the reforms that make these good things possible; and, most important, to highlight the great challenge before the United States today to turn around all low-performing schools and give all of our children a world-class education.

Yesterday morning I was in western Kentucky, in the little town of Owensboro, which has had extraordinary success in turning around its lowest performing schools. In 1996, the state identified 175 of them; just two years later, 159 -- over 90 percent -- had improved beyond the goals the state set for them. In the little school I visited, where two-thirds of the children were eligible for free and reduced lunches, in four years they had recorded the same sort of improvements that you mentioned here, on a trend line.

Which proves that income and station in life are not destiny; that all of our children can learn; that intelligence is equally distributed -- and that means the grown ups among us have a big responsibility to give every single one of these kids, like those beautifully, bright-eyed kids that I saw in this school -- and I just shook hands with every one of them -- have a chance to live up to their dreams. (Applause.)

Then, after I left Kentucky yesterday, I went to Davenport, Iowa, and I visited a 93-year-old high school finally beginning to get the renovations it needs so that students have the learning environment they need. Some of those school rooms didn't even have electrical outlets in the wall. And, believe it or not, it was even hotter in the gym there than it is here today. (Laughter.) So I'm just as cool as a cucumber now.

This morning I was in the nation's first charter schools in St. Paul, Minnesota, which is providing an excellent education to students who were not succeeding in other public schools. That was the first charter school in the country, established in 1992. They were basically schools within the public school system set up by teachers and parents and citizens with a specific, definite mission, and schools that can be shut down if they fail in that mission.

There was one in the whole country -- that one I visited today -- in '72. We've invested \$500 million since then and there are now 1,700, providing excellence in education to special needs of the people and their communities. And while I was there I actually had a webside chat on the Internet with students all across America about the challenges in education. And in a matter of about 20 minutes, they sent me over 10,000 questions. (Laughter.) So don't let anybody say the young people are not curious, they could ask faster than I could answer.

I really can think of no better place to wrap up my tour than here in Columbus, which has had a long history of educational intervention

and innovation and excellence. In 1909, Columbus opened the nation's very first junior high school.

And now, again, you're on the cutting edge of reform and improvement. I'm here today primarily not to talk, but to listen to the panelists here about what you're doing right. But I want to say for the benefit of the country and through the press who are here that this community has implemented high academic standards and assessments to see if the students and the schools are meeting those standards. They've given students help to meet those standards -- from after-school programs to smaller classes. Their strategy, which is our strategy in the Clinton-Gore administration, of investing more and demanding more is working.

Now, you heard our principal talk about the advances. Just in the last three years, the test scores have skyrocketed, and the test scores themselves have gone up more than 200 percent. But I don't know if you listened to that -- the percentage of students doing an acceptable job -- listen to this -- in one year -- she talked about two years ago and last year, not this year -- in one year, went up almost 500 percent in reading, over 300 percent in math, and 300 percent in science. In one year. All children can learn. (Applause.)

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the teachers who I also met outside, and to those of you who work to improve the quality of the teacher corps. Listen to this -- more than a third of these teachers have a master's degree and over 10 years' experience teaching. I understand your peer assistance and review program is helping both new and veteran teachers to do better by learning from each other -- something I very much believe in.

And this is very important -- you have cut the attrition rate of first-year teachers by 40 percent. This is terrifically important because we have so many teachers who will be retiring in America in the next few years, and we have the largest number of students in our schools in history. So reducing the attrition rate is a big deal and something you should be very proud of.

While there is still more work to be done here, and indeed, in every school in the country, you have proved that with the right ideas and the right tools, you can do what needs to be done.

Since 1993, our administration has worked hard to make education our number one priority, not just in a speech, but in reality. And I must say, I don't know that I have ever been more touched by anything I have ever seen in any school in my life as I was when I looked up, hanging from the ceiling on the corridor when I came down here -- and you had put up a history of what our administration had done since January of 1993 in education. I was completely blown away. (Applause.) I dare say that outside of Hillary, the Vice President and Secretary Riley, you now know more about what we have done than anybody else in America. (Laughter.)

But let me just briefly review a couple of the things that I think are important. When I came in office we had a \$295 billion deficit. Interest rates were high; unemployment was high; we had to get rid of the deficit. We had to keep doing things. We got rid of hundreds of programs. And as we turned a deficit into three years of surpluses, now this year we will have paid off \$355 billion of the national debt -- well on our way to getting America out of debt entirely, for the first time since 1835 -- we have doubled our investment in education and training. And I think that's very important. (Applause.)

But we also said to people that got federal aid to education, if you want this federal aid you have to have high standards for what your

children should know. We've given the states the resources they need to help schools implement those standards. We've required states to identify their low performing schools and come up with strategies to turn them around. We've helped to reduce class size in the early grades with our program, now in its third year, to provide 100,000 new, highly trained teachers in the first three grades.

I'm happy to say that 55 of those teachers are now in Columbus, two here at Eastgate. And this community has taken the average class size in grades one through three from nearly 25 down to 15. That is, doubtless, one reason you're seeing these big improvements in students' performance, and again I applaud you for that. (Applause.)

When I became President there was no federal support for summer school programs. All these studies would show the kids that were having trouble learning forgot a lot of what they did learn over the summer, and then the teachers would have to spend, four, six, sometimes as many as eight weeks reviewing what was done the year before, before they could even start on what they were being held responsible to teach in the new year.

We went from a \$1 million program in 1997, to \$20 million in '98, to \$200 million in '99, to \$450 million this year. And my budget asks for a billion dollars. If the Congress will give it to me, we will be able to guarantee summer school opportunities to every student in every low performing school in the entire United States of America. It is terribly important that we pass this.

What you have done here -- I know that 30 4th graders in this school participate in such programs. I said summer school, I meant after-school -- although the funds can also be used for summer school. I just came from Minneapolis, where a third of all their students are now in summer school programs, in the entire school district. Why? Because they have so many people who are coming from other countries whose first language is not English. They would never even have a chance to not only master the language, but learn what they need to learn if summer school weren't made available to them. So the after-school and the summer school programs are important.

We're trying to build or radically overhaul 6,000 schools and to modernize another 5,000 over the next five years -- 5,000 a year. We now -- when I became President we had only 3 percent of our classrooms and 16 percent of our schools connected to the Internet. Today, we have nearly 75 percent of the classrooms and 95 percent of the schools with at least one Internet connection with the e-rate, which the Vice President pioneered that gives a \$2 billion subsidy so that poorer schools and poorer communities can afford to have their schools log on to the Internet.

So we're working on it. I have sent Congress an education accountability act that basically seeks to ratify what you're doing. It says, set high standards, enforce them, end the practice of social promotion but don't punish the kids for the failures of the system; give after-school programs, give summer school programs. The kids can learn. We see it here. Have a system that works. And I hope that this will pass this year.

And let me just make two final points. As you principal said, I've been working at this a long time. I've been in a lot of schools and I never get tired of going into them. I've shaken hands with a lot of kids, and I'll never get tired of shaking hands with them. They make us all perpetually young.

But I can tell you this: There is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1979, when Secretary Riley and I

started in education reform. And there is a world of difference between what we know now and what we knew in 1983, when the Nation At Risk report was issued and when Hillary and I passed our first sweeping reforms at home in Arkansas.

We know what works. You're seeing what works in this school. What does that mean? It means again that the adults among us no longer have an excuse not to give these opportunities to every child in America. Because now we know what works.

The second thing I'd like to say is, with the strongest economy in our history, the great test the American people face this year in the elections, and those of us who are elected officials and as citizens, is what is it that we mean to do with this prosperity? If we're not going to do this now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to doing it? We're in the best shape economically we've ever been in. We can afford to do it, no matter what anybody says. And I think we ought to get about the business of doing it.

So that's why I came here, why I wanted to hear from all of you. And what the purpose of this panel is, is to sort of fill in the blanks of my remarks here so that we will have a clear sense of how far you've come, how you did it and what we need to do from here on out.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Now, I would like to begin by asking your superintendent to speak a little -- maybe in a little greater detail than I did in my remarks, or even than Principal Blake did in hers, and talk about how did you decide to do what you're doing and what exactly are you doing to turn around low-performing schools? That's the big issue in the whole country.

And let me just make one other comment. I've been in hundreds of schools and so many states. Nearly every problem you could ever dream of in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. The real problem with American education is we never get our solutions to scale. That is, we don't take what we're doing really right for some people and keep on at it until it's being done for everybody, for all the kids.

And there seems to me to be a real systematic effort here. So that's what I would like for you to talk about, Dr. Smith, in whatever way you want.

DR. SMITH: Well, Mr. President, I was hoping you would ask that question. (Laughter.) We think about this a lot. I think that improvement is multifaceted, and I think -- as I think about this often, that the single most important thing that happened during my tenure here as superintendent is that our board of education approved three narrowly focused goals. And so that enabled -- it gave direction to us. It enabled the entire district then to become focused in the same kind of way. And it also told our community what they could hold us responsible for in terms of the work that we do.

Secondly, I think that it is important that in Columbus now we are only going to implement research-based, proven programs. We're only going to do those things that we know have a real potential of working for us.

And then following that, we are building capacity in our district through staff development and extra support for schools. So extra support for teachers and their learning, and also for schools -- the types of things they need in order to make it work. We also implemented an assessment system and an accountability system that addresses both students and the adults who work in our school district.

Each of our schools, each of our departments have a continuous improvement plan that has an evaluation component. And our staff in every building in every department is working very hard to achieve what they said they needed to achieve for that.

And I'd also say that then we maximized the opportunities that have been presented to us, like the National Science Foundation grant that we've had for five years, the opportunities with reduced class size, the opportunities that our state has given us with kindergarten help and those kinds of things.

And I would lastly like to say that our community, this community, from the city to United Way to the faith community to the business community, are all lined up to support the work for Columbus's children. We put all that together, it starts to work. And I think that is much of why it is working for us here in Columbus. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, give her a hand. That's great. Let me just emphasize one thing she said because, unless you've heard people say these things a lot, it would be easy to miss. She said that there were three clearly defined goals, and then the second point she made I think is very important. She said we are using a research-based approach. That means -- that's a nice way of saying what I said in more crude language, that you don't have to sort of fire a shotgun at this problem anymore. It's not like we don't know what works. There is lots and lots of research available today as a result of the serious efforts of the last 20 years.

And one of the reasons that we have not had the kind of systematic results that we're seeing here around the country is that people don't take the research and really act on it. And it's interesting, because there is hardly any other endeavor of your life that you would ignore that in. If you were starting a business and 15 people had succeeded doing a certain thing, and three people had failed doing the reverse, you wouldn't say, well, I think I'll see if I can't make money doing what the three did. I think I can do it a little better.

So I think that Columbus deserves a lot of credit. I'd like to follow up by asking your principal, Barbara Blake, you've been a principal for a good while. As you pointed out, you wrote me when I was governor, and asked me about some of the things we were doing. Why do you think what you're doing now is working so much better?

MS. BLAKE: One reason is smaller class size. That is very, very important. The second reason is the power program. We have mentors that come in and work with our teachers, so when they need help they get it right then and there. If you want to have your students have excellence, the teacher also must be an excellent person. They need the support.

Back to smaller classes. They're able to work directly with the student. When you have a large class and the child has his hand up, she has to wait until you get to them. They will be able to get to them right away.

Those folks who have said that smaller classes are too expensive, my question to them is, how much is a child worth? We can protect us physically, with our armed forces, but who is going to protect our minds? And the ones who are going to protect our mind is our educational system. And we need -- as Dr. Smith said, the research base tells us this has worked, so let's keep working it instead of trying something new all the time. This has worked; let's keep working it. And high expectations always. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Just to give you some idea of what she said, I went through those numbers a minute ago, but I can't think of how you could possibly explain a 500-percent increase in the percentage of kids reading at the appropriate level in a year other than more individual attention by someone who is a good teacher and knows how to do it.

And let me say, this little class I visited in Kentucky yesterday, this elementary school class, all the kids and I took turns reading a chapter from the wonderful book, Charlotte's Web. And I made every child read a couple paragraphs. And some of those paragraphs are pretty tough for kids in the 3rd grade, you know, and they all got through it.

In four years, they had almost a tenfold increase. And you'll do even better than that at the rate you started. So I think this is very important. I think the smaller classes really do amount to something.

I'd like to ask Heather Knapp to speak next. She is a teacher at East Linden Elementary, and she was hired with the help of our class size reduction funds as a 1st grade teacher. And she teaches a class of 18 first-graders, along with a 25-year veteran of the Columbus Public Schools, Karen Johnson. And you, too, have, I understand, a large immigrant population in your school. So I'd like for you to talk a little about what the impact of children whose first language is not English is and the educational process and what you're doing.

MS. KNAPP: The grant has reduced our class size drastically, and has enhanced our level of instruction. With the reduction, my team teacher and I are able to work with our students in small groups and on a one-to-one basis.

We have the highest Somalian population that are falling behind. We are able to give them the one-on-one and spend the time helping them to assimilate to the American culture. We have a strong administrative support from Lillian Richardson and instead of meeting our expectations this year, we're exceeding them in our classroom.

THE PRESIDENT: My notes -- and they're not always right, but they usually are -- my notes say that if you didn't have these class size reduction funds to hire more teachers, that you and your team teacher, Ms. Johnson, would be each teaching separately, 1st grade classes with more than 30 students in them. And if that's true, there would be no way in the world you could deal with all these children whose first language is not English.

MS. KNAPP: No.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's pretty straightforward. (Laughter.)

MS. KNAPP: As a first year teacher, I believe, no. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I think many Americans have no idea just how diverse these student bodies are now. Like I said, I just came from Minneapolis, St. Paul. We think about that as sort of the capitol of Norwegian America. And it still is. But there are children in the Minneapolis-St. Paul school district combined with native languages in excess of 100, counting all the people who come from the different African and Southeast Asian peoples who are there. And the same thing is happening all over America.

Now, a lot of these kids, once they're here for about 18 months, if they good basic grounding, start to do very well, indeed. And since we're living in a global economy in an increasingly global society, this is a great advantage for the United States. We should be thrilled by this. This is going to put us in a very good position to do very well when all these children get out of school. Ten years, 20 years, 30

years from now our country will be the best positioned country in the entire global society if, but only if, we take care of these kids now.

Sometimes people back in Washington ask me why I spend so much time on this -- you know, when Barbara introduced me she said, the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and all that -- I think this is a national security issue for America. I think it's an important part of our long-term security. (Applause.) So I want you to keep plugging.

I'd like to ask the President of the Columbus Education Association now to talk a little bit about your teacher development strategies. Everybody who becomes a teacher knows that he or she is not going to become wealthy, but it's important to pay them enough so that they can afford to stay. But it's more than pay. People also want to feel that they're doing their job well.

Most people like to get up in the morning and look forward to going to work and believe that what they do is important and know they're doing it well. And that feeling is more important for teachers probably than any other single group in our society.

So I'd like to ask Mr. Grossman to talk a little bit about how this peer assistance review program works and how it contributes to teacher quality.

MR. GROSSMAN: Well, Mr. President, we're a little concerned that with all the negatives that have surrounded education that we don't have a pool of people going into teaching that we used to; and that as a result of that, it's become very imperative that we do the extra things to attract the best and then maintain the best within our district.

Peer review really strongly emphasizes the first year because I think back to the days -- although it's history now -- when I started in the classroom that we didn't get any supported. And now with this program we have a core of full-time release teachers who come out, support, mentor, work with the people on a regular basis throughout the entire first year, to make sure they find their way through the system. And our statistics show that we're holding onto our beginning teachers at a much better rate than we ever had before.

And once you begin to do that, you begin to build up a core of qualified teachers that will be able to sustain the system through the years. This is a partnership. This program is strongly run between the union, the administration. And we have a third partner that is always working with us, too -- the College of Education at the Ohio State University, that has provided a lot of insight and training for our people that's just fabulous.

And this -- is a basis where we make it clear that the teachers are going to be life-long learners -- it's sort of a cliché there -- but we take it serious here and we've got a whole series of courses now actually developed between the school district, the union and the College of Education, that we're providing virtually to them 26 different offerings this year to produce sustained growth and development for our experienced people throughout their entire people.

And the bottom line is this -- there is also a review part to it. We don't believe everybody has the right to teach, so we have to have a strong scrutiny of it. But we do believe in due process. And to make certain that all of these people are fairly and solidly supported and evaluated.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me just follow up on that a little bit. Again, this is one of those issues, it's very hard -- for example, we've got all these folks here who are reporting on this today. And it's very

hard to have a blaring headline across the Columbus paper tomorrow with an exclamation point, "Columbus committed only to use research-based strategies," or "Peer review and assistance the main thing" -- it doesn't have the edge, like, "Clinton robs a liquor store" or something. (Laughter.)

As a result of that, we often overlook what matters most. But let me just tell you this. We forget how much our teachers need support and training and the time and resources to do that. I think a lot of times we just assume that, well, if you went through school and you got good grades in math and you went to an education college and you took those courses well, obviously, you can teach math. We forget -- unless we've actually seen how hard they work -- how much time it takes for these teachers just to get through the day, to deal with the children, give them as much individual attention as possible, give the tests, grade the tests, deal with all the other stuff they have to deal with.

I can only tell you, most people believe the United States military is a pretty efficient operation. And we fought an air war in Kosovo and didn't lose a single pilot. But let me tell you, we did lose pilots. They didn't die in that war. They were pilots that die every year in the military training of the country. And we spend a lot of your tax money just training people relentlessly, over and over and over again. We don't assume that some people are smart and some people are dumb, and some people can do it and some people can't. We assume in the military that the people we accept and the people we train are capable of doing the mission that they were assigned. We don't even assume that you're either a born leader or not, and if you're not born one, you can't lead. We train people to lead, too, in the military, and they lead. And a lot of people who would never be picked as leaders the whole time they're born until the time they join the military wind up performing superbly.

If you look at the best-run companies, they invest huge amounts of time and money in developing the capacities of their people. And we have never done this for our teachers in the sort of systematic way that we should -- setting aside the time we should, investing the money in it we should. And again, it's a very hard thing for -- the mayor can run for election, somebody can run for the school board or somebody can run for President, and it's the last thing you'll ever see them say because you can't turn it into a headline with an exclamation or a 30-second television ad. But it matters.

That's why I wanted John to talk about it. It is so important. And it means something to the teachers. It's a way of reaffirming their significance and their capacity to grow in satisfying their own intellectual hunger. Any time you think training doesn't matter for education, suppose I would say to you, I've got a way to give you a bigger tax cut; we'll cease all training operations in the military and we'll just take smart people and see how they do? (Laughter.)

So this is very, very important. And I thank you for that.

Mr. Mayor, tell me, what has the mayor got to do with the schools here? (Laughter.) What is it you're trying to do?

MAYOR COLEMAN: I'm asked that question often, Mr. President. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: They ask me, too, all the time. (Laughter.)

MAYOR COLEMAN: Yes. Let me tell you. The mayor does not have any legal or direct responsibility over our school system. But, Mr. President, I'm a mayor that believes that education is everybody's business, including the mayor. And what that means is that our city needs to step up to the table -- and has, in fact -- to help.

I'm one that believes that after-school care is very important. That's an area where we can help. You talked about proven efforts, proven

programs. Well, after-school is proven, because I'm one that believes that education doesn't end when the school bell rings, learning continues after kids get out of school. And in the city of Columbus, the hours between the time that kids get out of school and parents come home, between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., are the highest times of juvenile crime in this city, but they are also the highest time for parental worry.

So what we are trying to accomplish in this city is a stronger, more systematic, comprehensive after-school system where education can continue. And we've been working with our school system and Superintendent Smith in that regard. In fact, Mr. President, even tomorrow we have this city's first after-school summit where we're bringing the people together from all over the city to address how we get there and what kind of funding -- Mr. President -- (laughter) -- is necessary to accomplish that. And we're looking forward to that.

I started this city's first Office of Education in the Mayor's Office, and as you know, I've been there four months. And we appointed a new member of Cabinet by the name of Hannah Dillard, who is here this afternoon, who was the director of the first Office of Education. And we're serious. We believe that the future of this city is dependent upon how strong our kids are as it relates to education. It's the cornerstone of this community.

And I can tell you here, looking out in this audience I see members of the Chamber of Commerce, people in our neighborhoods, people in this very neighborhood, and I think that's good. At any rate, bottom line is education is everything to our city and it's the future to our city. And after-school is going to be our focus, and mentorship as well as many other things.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me just say, I think that -- first, I think you're to be commended and I assure you that I will be fighting as hard as I can to get the appropriation doubled again. But as I said, in 1997, I got a million dollars out of the Congress to plan for a federal after-school program. And then we went from \$20 million to \$200 million to \$450 million in three years. And we estimate that if we can get up to a billion dollars a year in federal support for after-school, at least we'll be able to give cities like Columbus enough money to target all the schools where either the performance is the most disappointing or you have the highest percentage of low-income kids.

But I think you will want to do more than that, and you'll probably have to make a case to the business community and others that it's a good economic investment for the city. But again I'll say, particularly if you have a lot of immigrant children, it's really important -- these kids need as much time as they can to master the language so they can begin to learn all the other things they need to learn. And they just cannot do it in the regular day, in the regular school year.

And I'll do what I can to help you. But I think you deserve it. I think you've made the right decision about what's best for you. (Applause.)

MAYOR COLEMAN: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to call on a parent now, a stakeholder in this enterprise. Linda Hoetger -- is that right? I studied German in college. (Laughter.) Linda and her husband, Ray, have four sons,

all in the Columbus public school system. Both of them volunteer to work in the school system. And their nine-year-old son at East Columbus Elementary School got a federal, 21st Century Learning Center Grant to start an after-school program. So I'd just like for her to talk to us about her work in the after-school program at her son's school -- how does it work, how did it start, what does she do, what is your view of the role of parents in this.

But I would really like to begin just by thanking you and your husband for your support for the schools and for your willingness to give your time. I'd like for you to talk about what you do.

MS. HOETGER: Thank you. I'm scared to death, but that's okay. (Laughter.) We are parent volunteers at East Columbus, and we were on the starting of the 21st Century Learning Grant that was given to East Columbus. And it's to get more after-school programs into the building and have the kids more areas to learn with.

In the afternoon they come in and they have tutoring, if they need tutoring or whatever. They come in, just sit down and enjoy themselves. But with the grant is helping because there are kids that are having problems because they're not a two-house family, so they're trying to get the people -- the families to be together, and work with the parents. And --

THE PRESIDENT: You're doing fine.

MS. HOETGER: We try to get the parents together to work with their kids that have the needs to get more learning. A lot of them are behind that need the extra edge and the grant is helping that a lot.

They do do the 4th grade proficiency tutoring, and my son was part of that and it helped him tremendously. With him doing the tutoring, I was there to be able to help him and know what the test was all about, because it's a very complicated test. And it gave them, I think it was five weeks to deal with this test and not be so stressed when the test came. We try and volunteer wherever we can at the building and at the after-school program. It's been an enjoyment to be volunteering with all the programs.

THE PRESIDENT: Is all the after-school work at the school where you work designed toward helping prepare them for the test or giving them homework assistance? Are there any other kind of things --

MS. HOETGER: A little bit of homework assistance, preparing for the proficiency test. Also there is the parts where they have a mobil unit that comes in that gives them the shots and stuff. And then there's also -- they just had a "break it down" session for the kids that -- stressed. And then the psychologist came in -- or the social worker came in and was with the kids and had a little class with them, to tell you how to do your -- instead of fighting or arguing, how to solve it peacefully.

THE PRESIDENT: I think this is really important. If I might just say, again, I've talked to a lot of young people in a lot of schools about violence, obviously because of all the very high profile tragedies we've had in our schools.

But I think it's worth pointing out that in spite of those high profile tragedies, gun violence in America is down 35 percent since 1993. And violence in the schools has declined. And I think one of the principle reasons is involving more young people in peer programs and training more young people -- young people, like the rest of us, people model the behavior they see, either at home or they learn on television or in some other way. People are not born knowing how to resolve their

anger, their frustration, their conflicts in a non-violent way.

And if they don't have models, if they have either destructive models or no models at all, you run the risk of having a higher incidence of violence. So I wanted you to talk about this because I also think this is very important.

Again, the more diverse the student body becomes, the more likely there are to be moments when people who won't understand each other because their backgrounds will be so different, their experiences will be so different. And when those moments come it's very, very important that young people at least have been given a chance to know that there's some other way to resolve their differences.

Also that they don't have to bury them, because that also becomes a big problem. I mean, a lot of these kids that do really bad things are too far gone when the times they do it; but it's only after years and years and years and years of internalizing things that, had they not been buried, the children might have been saved.

So I think that you deserve a lot of credit for that, too, and I think that should be a part of every school's effort, and I thank you for it. (Applause.)

I want to now talk to Laura Avalos-Arguedas, who is an AmeriCorps volunteer with the City Year program in Columbus. She was born in Costa Rica and moved to the United States when she was six years old. She graduated from Grandview Heights High School in 1998 and began a two year volunteer program in City Year, where she tutors four 1st grade students in reading at the Second Avenue Elementary School.

So I'd like for her to talk about that. And I just want to say, I don't know that I have done anything as President that I'm any more proud of than establish the AmeriCorps program. We've now had over 150,000 -- (applause) -- young people like Laura spend one or two years in this program, working in communities, sometimes in their home communities, sometimes half a nation away, and at the process, earning money for college.

In the first four years of AmeriCorps we had more people than we had in the first 20 years of the Peace Corps. And it's just been an amazing thing. So I'd like for you, Laura to talk about why did you decide to become a volunteer in the City Year program and how do you feel about the mentoring you're doing and the relationships you're building with the students and do you think it's improving their learning?

MS. AVALOS-ARGUEDAS: I'm here to speak for the kids today. I heard about City Year at an international fair when I was a freshman or sophomore in high school. I was like, wow, that's so awesome, I want to do that. Because we are made up of young people from diverse backgrounds. And when I saw this group of people together, everybody was very much united and it didn't matter what we looked like, how we talked -- it didn't matter. We were just united. And I was so impressed with that. I was, like, wow, that's really cool.

And then my senior year a couple years ago I was, like, wow, where am I going to go to college? And I was so stressed out and I didn't know what I was going to be doing. And then I remembered City Year and what I really wanted to do.

I work with four young children, one kindergartener -- first graders at Second Avenue. I work with them one on one. One-on-one work is probably the most unbelievable work because I am lucky enough to see their improvement myself throughout a 10-month period. -- one last

year, he was held back. In the beginning of the year, he was reading at a level 3, which is kindergarten reading level. Now he's reading at a level 13 very well, where he needs to be for 1st grade. I'm very proud of him; he's done great work.

Not only do we do very good literacy work, but we are also role models for the kids because we're there every day. Many of these children don't have people that are there every day for them, and we're able to be there every day. I'm asked to be people's moms; I'm looked at their sister. I'm very happy and very lucky to be there.

And we also run an after-school program at East Columbus Elementary School. And there we -- right now we have a curriculum that is called "Kindness and Justice" where we teach about respecting others, about serving our community, about honesty, responsibility -- just everything that it takes to be a good citizen. And we make sure that these kids have a place to go. In the beginning of the year, we had 140 students show up at the after-school program, and only 7 corp members. And we were like, oh, no! So we had to cut it down a lot. But these children are very happy, the kids that we have right now.

I've learned a lot, too. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Mayor, I think if she had 140 kids show up with 7 corps members, she just made the strongest case for your after-school initiative. (Laughter.)

MAYOR COLEMAN: I think she has.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you need to make her witness A in your --

MS. AVALOS-ARGUEDAS: We have to cut down.

MAYOR COLEMAN: I might point out as well, there are 50,000 kids between the ages of 6 and 14 years old that are in need of after-school care here, but there are only 13,000 slots available in the city. So your work is to be commended.

THE PRESIDENT: I want to go now to a product of another program I'm very proud of that I did not start. It existed in the government when I became President, but we have dramatically expanded it. It's called Troops to Teachers program, where people who have served in the military, when they retire or when they leave the military then move into teaching. And in an environment in which a lot of our kids come from difficult home situations, I think that the Troop to Teachers program has made a big impact in a lot of places.

Eastgate Elementary has a teacher who came out of 20 years in the Air Force, Darrell Bryon. He's here with us today. And I'd like for him to talk a little bit about what made him decide to switch careers. He doesn't look old enough to have been in the Air Force 20 years. (Laughter.) I don't know if he was honest about his age when he joined. (Laughter.) And he teaches a 4th-5th grade split class. I'd like for him to talk a little bit about how his previous experience helps him in the classroom.

Mr. Byron.

MR. BYRON: Well, Mr. President, I think my previous experience just establishing a work ethic -- because teaching, as any teacher knows, is not a 6-7 day job. Sometimes it turns into a 24-hour job. People don't realize that. But I think the military established a strong work ethic in me, and with that I brought that to Eastgate. And my principal, Mrs. Blake, who I guess unlike my commanders in the military, is not the type who would tell you, I want this in the

morning, and they go home and get in the bed and then expect you to deliver to them when they come back to work in the morning. Most times when she says, I need this, then she's right there with me.

And I think that with that it has helped me to learn, to deal with the children in a different way. Because each and every situation is not a situation that sometimes can be easily handled, and sometimes you want to carry it over to the next day, but you have to stop and you have to think about what has happened. And then when that child comes in, I think a hard thing for adults to do is to let go. Children let go. It's hard for adults to let go. And I think when the children come in the next day, you can greet them and let them know that you've let go also. I think that's been the easiest lesson for me to learn, because I guess my military experience in dealing with different people, as you stated earlier, from different backgrounds -- children with different backgrounds -- and dealing with people with different backgrounds, I think I've learned to accept differences in people.

And one of the things that I had a hard time adjusting to at first was the attitudes of the children. In the military, if somebody told you to do something, especially if they outranked you, you didn't question it, you just did it. (Laughter.) I remember the first day of school, I walked in and the children were lining up -- get in line. And they're like, why? (Laughter.) And I had to stop and think. And people, they so often say that males make a big difference. I think they do make a big difference in the schools, but I'm standing there, six feet tall, looking at these little children, saying -- now, he's here questioning me, why. What am I going to tell this little child?

And we had another teacher -- we co-teach or help each other a lot in the classroom -- Ms. Lester -- and she's not even five feet tall. And she walks over and she says, because he told you to. (Laughter.) And they immediately got in line. (Laughter and applause.)

But I think my military experience has taught me to expect a lot from the children, but being accepting of their backgrounds and respectful of their backgrounds. What I would like to see is one thing, but all the pieces of the puzzle have to be in place in order for that to happen. You talked about education becoming a national security issue now, and I really believe it is, because even in my latter years in the military, I saw a drastic change in the quality of recruits -- the work ethic. I found myself sometimes wanting to take on more than I should have to take on. Span of control. There were issues that should have been dealt with by the younger troops -- my younger troops -- that in order to get the job done I took them on.

And it wasn't that their ability wasn't there, but a lot of it was work ethic. And I see that in young children today, the ability, the intelligence is all there, but it's like you have to pull it out. And I think that's one of the things that the military has taught me, you just don't let something go, but you do everything you can to get that maximum performance from your troops at that time, but now I say my students. And I think that that is what has taught me to try to pull out everything I can with them. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: When you told that story about your student sort of talking back to you, I thought to myself, his training in the military has qualified him to be a teacher; his experience as a teacher may have qualified him to be President. (Laughter.) So I can really identify with that.

Harry Truman once said that being President was a job in which you spent most of your time trying to talk people into doing things they should do without your having to ask them in the first place. (Laughter.) But I thank you for your dedication.

Let me now call on Shirley Goins, who is a teacher in the Monroe Middle School, a 6th-grade teacher. And she has worked as a teacher for 30 years. She's taught at Monroe the last 18. And Monroe recently instituted a school uniform policy which required the children to wear white shirts and blue bottoms. And the parents of the students supported it.

When I started supporting these several years ago, some people derided me as being for a "little idea" that a President shouldn't be paying attention to. But I was inclined to disagree. And I would like for Shirley to talk a little bit about why her school adopted this policy and what its effect on discipline and academic achievement and the way the students relate to each other has been.

MS. GOINS: Thank you, Mr. President. We decided to approach having uniforms in our schools after so many styles of clothing had come out -- with the sagging of the pants and tee-shirts saying anything you wanted to say. And we felt that some of these things were distracting to learning.

Our school had a dress code anyway, whereas young men don't wear ear rings, young girls don't wear nose rings. We had already been asking our students to tuck their shirts in; if they had loops they should wear belts. So we already had our dress code in place that was unlike some of the other schools. But we thought we needed to take it another step further, and that is to help the students really get into that mode of thinking about education.

When you all look alike, you don't have to point out the difference in, hey, did you see that skirt she has on today, or look at those pants he has, and all the thousand pockets on them, or what have you.

I will never forget the very first day, because we've been doing this for three years now -- but on the very first day, the teachers greet all of the students as they enter the school building --

THE PRESIDENT: That's great.

MS. GOINS: -- and they all come into the auditorium. And on that day when they all walked in, with their blue and white on, it was just a moment that is hard to describe, because they looked so clean and crisp and ready to learn. It was truly an experience.

The students have accepted the dress code. Of course, those who are 8th graders now, they are looking forward to moving on to high school when they no longer have a dress code. (Laughter.) But I'm happy to say that we have students who follow this dress code 98 to 100 percent each day. Every now and then there are circumstances where they are unable to do it. I have a young man who, just this past weekend, there was a fire in his home. And so his mom sent a note asking could he wear what he had available until they could get back into the uniform area.

Students are focusing on their work. They are not distracted by the frivolous types of clothing. They know that they can wear those things on the weekend. We feel that it has cut down on behavior type problems. You don't have someone wearing a long chain that someone else wants to snatch and cause some type of hazard, or someone trips as they're going up the steps. It's really made a difference in our building.

I truly believe in the uniform. I wear the uniform quite often myself. I feel that when I do that, the students don't feel as though they're the only ones that have to wear it. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. You know, when I started -- my wife is the first person who ever talked to me about school uniforms. She's always been for them. She's a fanatic supporter of -- now, I guess now that she's a candidate for office, I shouldn't use the word "fanatic." (Laughter.) Subject to being used against her, I suppose. But we talked about it a lot for young kids. And the first place I went to explore this was Newport Beach, California, which is the third biggest school district in California.

And when the junior high schools adopted it out there, the middle schools, they did it in self-defense, because they had a lot of gangs. So they picked colors to dress in that would protect the kids. All the gangs wore red and blue, so all the uniforms were something other than red and blue. And then all the schools got to pick their own colors and do whatever they wanted.

But I had two children talking to me about it --one young man who came from a difficult circumstance who told me it was the first time he felt safe walking to school in two years. And one young woman who was in a much better situation, economically, where she said she felt like she had been liberated; that neither she, nor her classmates could look down on or feel looked down on as a result of the clothes they wore. They were no longer distracted and they felt good. They were looking forward to going to high school where they wouldn't have to do it anymore, but they thought it had really calmed the atmosphere in the school and that learning had increased and discipline problems had decreased. I thought it was a very interesting.

Between Hillary and those kids, I've been pretty well sold on it ever since. (Applause.) Yes, one person agrees with me in the crowd. (Laughter.) Is this a school-by-school option in the Columbus school district?

MS. GOINS: Yes, Mr. President, it is not required, it is a school community decision with parents.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, how many schools have uniform policies in this --

MS. GOINS: Mr. President, I cannot answer that question. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anybody know? Are there others? But there is more than one?

MS. GOINS: There are others. There are several -- many, I would say.

THE PRESIDENT: I think, by the way, that's a good decision. I think if you have it district-wide, then you've got to -- there you go, good for you, looks great. That looks great. I think you either have to -- if it's going to be a district-wide decision it's got to be handled just the way it would be school-by-school. It's a very delicate thing. It only works if the parents are for it. And if the kids buy into it; even if they have reservations, they've got to buy into it.

So it's better not something that somebody like me decides is the right thing to do. What we tried to do is to show people how to do it, including how districts have dealt with the families who couldn't afford to buy the uniforms, where they got the money, how they did all that sort of stuff. But I do think it has some merit.

MS. GOINS: Well, we keep extras in our schools so that if a child has an accident during the day there are extra shirts or extra pants.

But before we approached this, we did have meetings with parents, students and teachers, so that we were all on the same page, that this is what we wanted to do.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, what school do you represent in your uniform?

Q I represent Columbus --

THE PRESIDENT: Good for you. That's a great looking uniform. Thank you. (Applause.) I have been hissed and cheered by students talking about this. (Laughter.)

MAYOR COLEMAN: You're only going to be cheered here in Columbus, Mr. President. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anything else anybody would like to say? Is there anybody in the audience wants to ask anybody on the panel a question? Yes, sir?

Q Mr. President, I was wondering if Al Gore, if he becomes the next President, will be continuing your policies and ideals? Because they are excellent.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he actually -- he's been outlining his education program, and I would say that there are a couple of areas, obviously, because he can look ahead four years beyond what I can argue for. One of the things that he believes in addition -- he has supported our Educational Accountability Fund, that I just explained, and all these things I talked about. And he's going to have -- he's actually giving a whole speech tomorrow on teacher quality, which I hope you will follow. He's been working very hard on it, and talking to people around the country, educators and other.

In addition to that, in the primary, he came out for a program to add another 100,000 teachers, federally funded, to the 100,000 that we've already provided. We're very concerned that over the next decade another 2 million teachers will retire as the number of students continues to swell. And so we think it -- you know, I agree -- but he came and talked to me about this. He didn't -- it was entirely his idea, not mine. But he said, I think I'm going to go out there and advocate that we take a certain percentage of this surplus and just dedicate it to helping the communities hire teachers. Once we get the 100,000 in there so we know we can get an average class size of 20 in the early grades, the rest -- we're just going to be killing ourselves to get properly qualified teachers in the classroom because people retire.

And so I think you could feel every confidence that he would support the things that have been done, but that he would build on them and do better. That's what I think will happen. (Applause.)

Q Mr. President, I would like to share with the audience what the first-grader said to you this morning, and it may be a message for Vice President Gore, and he said that you are a great President, and he wanted you to know that whoever followed you was going to have a really tough time. So that may be the answer -- (applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I appreciated his saying that, but the truth is that the country is changing a lot economically, and let me try to put this education issue that we've been talking about here into the larger context.

When I became President in 1992, and the people of Ohio were good enough to vote for me and the Vice President, the big issue was how could we turn the country around. The economy was in a shambles, the

crime was exploding, the welfare rates were exploding, things didn't seem to be working. And so in the last seven years, I've tried to look to the long-term challenges of the future, but first we had to get the ship of state righted. Things had to be working.

Now, you're not very cynical anymore about whether you can actually make things better. I mean, if you look at -- you know, we've gone from a big deficit to a big surplus, we're paying down the debt, we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the welfare rolls have been cut in half, crime is down to a 25-year low, poverty is at a 20-year low, African American, Hispanic unemployment the lowest ever recorded, female unemployment the lowest in 40 years.

I say that to say nobody questions whether we have the capacity as a people to improve. Nationwide, reading and math scores are up about a grade level. But in places where there's been a sharp focus on results, and on turning around low-performing schools like Columbus, the results are much more dramatic. But they're up. We have 90 percent of our kids are immunized against serious diseases for the first time, we've -- all the environmental indicators are better.

So the question that the country faces now is a very different question than it faces in 1992. The question we face now is, what is it that we propose to do with this moment of unprecedented prosperity? The question, by the way, also is not whether you're going to change. The world is changing so fast, America will change. It will change just as much in the next four years as it has in the previous four, and the four before that. So the question is not whether you're going to change. The question is how you're going to change.

You know, if the Vice President were running for President and he said, vote for me, I'll do everything Bill Clinton did, I wouldn't vote for him. Because the world's going to be different. That's not -- his message is that, look, this approach works, so we ought to change by building on it. And here's how I'll build on it. I don't think we ought to abandon the approach in economics and education and health care and welfare reform and all these issues, but we're going to have to change. And my take on this as a citizen, as well as somebody with some experience now in these affairs, is that the way to decide what direction you want to take is to first ask yourself, where would you like to go.

I remember one of the funniest things Yogi Berra used to say is that, we may be lost, but we're making good time. (Laughter.) I mean, you've got to ask yourself, where would you like to go? Now, my opinion is -- and again, it's not going to be on my watch, but my opinion is that for the first time in at least 35 years, since we had this kind of economy again, which basically came apart in the Vietnam War and the civil rights crisis, and a lot of other problems we had in the country in the 1960s -- this is the first time we've had since then to say, okay here's where we want to go, and here's what we're going to do to get there.

So my view is, one of our goals ought to be to guarantee that every child in this country will have access to a world-class education; that everybody will be able to afford to go to college if they're otherwise qualified; that poverty among children can be eliminated within through the tax system and other supports; that every working family ought to be able to at least have access to affordable health insurance; that we will deal with the challenges that the aging of America -- when the baby-boomers retire and there's only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security -- we will act now, not then, to save Social Security and Medicare, and add a prescription drug benefit that's voluntary for the seniors. Big challenges.

On the environmental front, we have to tackle this whole issue of global warming. You're all in here fanning yourselves -- the truth is that the climate of this Earth is going up at a very difficult rate. Now, that may seem like an obscure issue, because Columbus is way inland, but it's not going to be very funny if the polar icecaps keep melting, and the oceans rise, and the sugar cane fields in Louisiana, and the Florida Everglades were buried, and the agricultural production of America starts to go north, and the whole framework of life here is changed -- and people

in Africa start getting even more cases of malaria and children dying from dehydration. This is a big issue.

So that's what I gave my State of the Union address -- but I think what all you need to decide as citizens is, what do you want for your kids; what do you want for your families; what do you want for your future; where do you want to go? Then you have to say -- eight years ago, I wouldn't have believed that we could write the future of our dreams. But now I know America can work.

So again, it's kind of like school reform. We don't have an excuse anymore for not saying what would we like America to be like when our children are our age. Because we know we can make America better now. We don't have an excuse; we know that. So every one of you -- I wish you'd go home and take a piece of paper and say, what would I like America to look like in 10 years? And then, how does America have to change -- not whether, but how -- to get there.

That's how you'll know who to vote for. That's how you know what ideas you think work. To ask yourself, where do you want to go? And my earnest plea to the American people this year is to do that, so we can take on these big challenges -- because that's what I've been working for. I've been working for the day that when I left office, this country would have both the self-confidence and the capacity to build the future of our dreams for our children. And we can do it now. That's what I think we ought to be doing. (Applause.)

DR. SMITH: Mr. President, on behalf of the Board of Education, everyone in this room, our entire community, we are pleased that you brought this conversation to this school district in this community. We appreciate that you have affirmed the work that we've begun. We appreciate what you're trying to do for children all over this country. We appreciate where you have brought this country to. We respect you, and we appreciate your presidency. Thank you, Mr. President. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. (Applause.)

MAYOR COLEMAN: Mr. President, I, too, want to thank you for coming to Columbus to put a spotlight on education, a national spotlight on education. We're working hard in this city and we're committed. It's going to take all of us -- the school system, every person in this audience, every person in our neighborhoods. But you've set a great standard and a great deal of leadership for this nation. We are better off now than where we were eight years ago, and I want to thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR COLEMAN: And I'm glad we had it here at Eastgate, too. (Applause.) Eastgate is historic. This is an historic school, not only because my wife graduated from Eastgate -- (laughter) -- but because the first African American nurse was here at Eastgate; because so many teachers helped raise so many kids right here at Eastgate.

And, Mr. President, I'm glad you were here to, again, put the spotlight on Eastgate and this school system. God bless you.
(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. (Applause.)

END 5:55 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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October 1, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON EDUCATION LEGISLATION

The South Lawn

3:40 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen, there really is nothing for me to say. I want to thank the previous speakers, each in their own way, for what they have given and what they will give to the children of our country. I believe that Secretary Riley is not only the longest serving, but the most intensely committed and effective Secretary of Education this country has ever had. (Applause.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Think of the challenges we have overcome as a people in the last six years. The crime rate has gone down to a 25-year low. The welfare

rolls are at a 29-year low. It's the first time in 29 years we've had a balanced budget. The unemployment rate is at a 28-year low. The home ownership rate in this country is at an all-time high.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The third thing we want to do on that one day is to help our

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

I have seen the benefits of these programs all across America. Last week I visited a school in Chicago where all the students came from the, I think now famous, housing project of Cabrini Green. Students in Chicago no longer advance to the next grade unless they can pass tests to demonstrate that they know what they were supposed to learn. But if they have trouble passing the tests, they are not branded failures, because the system has failed them. Instead, they are offered academically enriched summer school and after-school programs. Over 40,000 children now get three hot meals a day there. The summer school is now the sixth biggest school district in the United States. And guess what? In that school I visited in Cabrini Green, the reading scores have doubled and the math scores have tripled in three years. (Applause.)

We only ask for one day for these initiatives -- and, oh, by the way, one day for a decent appropriations bill. That's the job that Congress is supposed to do every year. (Applause.) And we are depending upon the leadership of Senator Tom Harkin and Congressman David Obey to see that we get that kind of appropriations bill. The one the House has passed does not meet that test.

Let me tell you a little about it. It shortchanges our youngest children in Head Start, our new initiatives in higher education for mentoring children, and preparing quality teachers. It shortchanges these after-school care programs. It shortchanges our major education program to help children learn the basics. It shortchanges my Hispanic education action plan. It shortchanges our efforts for school reform and high standards and our commitment to hook all those classrooms up to the Internet by 2000. It even shortchanges our efforts for safe, disciplined, drug-free schools. It shortchanges our young people in school-to-work efforts. It shortchanges workers who need retraining between jobs. It shortchanges our efforts to help disadvantaged youth get jobs. And in the House, unbelievably, it completely eliminates the summer job program for half a million young people.

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

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

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

END

3:54 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 19, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT SCHOOL SAFETY EVENT

The Grand Foyer

2:09 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Superintendent Berg; Madam Attorney General; Senator Robb, thank you so much for your efforts. Congressman Castle, thank you. Mayor Donnelly, welcome and I want to say a special word of welcome to all of the students. I'm glad you're here today and I thank you for the example you're setting for students throughout our country.

I also want to commend the students who were the winners of the state math and science award earlier this month. This school is proving that by taking the right kind of action -- working with law enforcement, enforcing zero tolerance for guns and drugs, involving parents, establishing discipline and order as primary goals. We can keep our schools safe and give our children the chance to reach their highest potential.

Now, in less than 650 days, all of us will enter a new century and a new millennium. At a time when we're doing everything we can to prepare our children for the opportunities of that new century, at a time when we know that the body of knowledge that human beings have is doubling every five years and, therefore, education will be more important than ever before, we cannot let violence, guns, drugs stand between our children and the education they need.

For more than five years, we've worked now to make our schools places of learning, not fear. We have worked to strengthen and expand the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, to enforce zero tolerance for guns in schools, to encourage communities to crack down on truancies, to support those who wish to adopt school uniform policies. Wearing uniforms instead of gang colors in many places is helping to keep our children safe.

It was just a little over two years ago that I went to Long Beach, California, the first large school district to adopt a school uniform policy. Since then, Secretary Riley and the Department of Education have worked to help those schools that wanted to do that. Yesterday, the New York City School Board announced that it would adopt a school uniform policy in all its elementary schools. I applaud them for taking this important step, and I predict it will have very beneficial consequences.

Our budget makes an unprecedented commitment as we are moving into balance for the first time in 30 years to invest for our future, by raising standards and improving education for all our children, and to make our schools safer. We know schools with the biggest discipline problems also have the highest rates of violence. Very often, there are simply too many students and too few classrooms with not enough

teachers. Our budget, as Senator Robb said, will help that, will help to reduce class sizes to an average of 18 students per class in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades, with 100,000 more teachers and funds to build or rehabilitate 5,000 schools.

Perhaps even more important in the short run on the violence issue -- and I was glad to hear Mr. Berg talk about this -- it will quadruple federal support for after-school programs to keep children in school in wholesome, positive environments. We know that most children who get in trouble do so between the time school lets out and their folks get home from work. So I applaud you for what you're doing and I hope now if this budget passes there will be many, many more schools, until every school in America will offer this kind of community support to our young people and their families. (Applause.)

The fundamental issue here is that we do not need to and we must not ever have to make a choice between safety and high standards, between crime-free schools and modern classrooms. We must do both. I regret that the present budget, reported out by the Majority in Congress, does not embody that kind of commitment to education in our future, does not embody the recommendations I made in the State of the Union Address.

Today, I ask the Republican leadership to join with the leaders of the other party to get with the Democrats and to work with the White House so that we can once again, as we have in the past, pass a bipartisan budget that puts education beyond politics and says yes to safer schools, yes to new teachers and smaller classes, yes to modernizing our schools, yes to investing in high standards. We need to have a budget that says yes to our children's future.

The Nationwide Report on School Safety that is being released today by the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education shows clearly that the majority of our schools are safe, free of violent crime. That is good news. It also shows, however, that too many of our children face a far more frightening reality every time they walk through the schoolhouse door. In 1996 alone there were more than 10,000 physical attacks or fights with weapons in schools; 7,000 robberies; 4,000 rapes and sexual assaults. The threat of such violence hangs over children's heads and closes their minds to learning. When children have to worry more about guns and drugs than math and science, when teachers are more concerned with maintaining discipline than achieving excellence, when parents would rather keep their children at home than risk their safety at school, then we know we must do more; and if there is even one school in America where that is the case, we must all be committed to change it. We already know the difference community policing makes.

Since we began to help our local communities to put 100,000 more community police officers on our streets, crime has dropped to record lows all over our country. Indeed, in the nation overall, crime is at a 24-year low. I thank Senator Robb for his sponsorship for the \$17.5 million in the balanced budget bill which is now being awarded today in grants to communities, parents and law enforcement groups to put these community policing strategies to work in our schools, to stop violence before it starts.

The more we know about school violence, the more we can do to ensure our children's safety. Last December, I asked the Attorney General and Secretary Riley to develop an annual report on school safety. Today, I'm pleased to accept their framework for these reports. From now on at the beginning of every school year, parents and principals, lawmakers and law enforcement will have a valuable tool that tracks school violence, gives examples of school programs that are working, and suggests actions parents can take to make their children's

lives safer at school.

We know one of the best ways to reduce violence is to involve the young people themselves. In the last several years, AmeriCorps volunteers particularly have helped hundreds of students to resolve their conflicts peacefully. This adds to AmeriCorps' remarkable record of helping improve our schools and communities through volunteer service.

Parenthetically, I want to say that today we had an announcement up on the Hill with the First Lady participating that we are sending legislation to Congress to extend our national service program into the 21st Century; I hope Congress will support AmeriCorps as it has in the past. (Applause.)

Let me say, finally, as Mr. Berg said so eloquently, we know that all of our schools need parents to play the primary role in their children's safety, both in the school and in the home, and when necessary, in the neighborhood.

Today, I ask all our parents who are concerned about this to become involved in your communities and your children's schools; to join a community policing partnership. Senator Robb got the budget, we're releasing the funds, we can talk about what works; but in the end, real live American citizens are going to have to show up in every school in this country to make this work.

You know, if you look at these young people here today, if you think about the remarkable achievements of this fine school we honor, if you imagine the interesting, fascinating lives they can have, and you remember that, as they have good lives it will make all the rest of our lives better, it is clear that we all have a responsibility to ensure that their educations will be safe. We can do this and America's future in the 21st Century depends upon it.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

2:18 P.M. EST