sible for them to support themselves. We can be tough, but we've got to be practical.

I want welfare reform that moves people from dependence to independence, from welfare to work. So my proposal is a welfare-to-work plan, not just a welfare plan that cuts welfare. So that's the first change I want to make in the Republican welfare proposal. Before I'll sign it into law it's got to have a stronger work component.

Second, the House bill is too tough on children. It cuts off aid to children who are on welfare just because their mothers are young and unmarried. These children didn't choose to be born to single mothers; they didn't choose to be born on welfare; they didn't choose to be born to women who are teenagers. We ought to remember that a child is a child, a baby is a baby. Whether they're white, black, or brown, whether they're born in or out of wedlock, anybody anywhere is entitled to a chance and innocence if it's a baby. We simply shouldn't punish babies and children for their parents' mistakes.

So we can be good to our children and give them a chance to have a better life because we're got a stake in that. Just think about it. Every child born in America, whether they're born to a welfare family or to a middle class family or to a wealthy family, is going to grow up and be a part of our future. The child may grow up to be in a university or be in jail or somewhere in between. But the chances are awful good that what happens to the child will be influenced by what happens to the babies in their earliest days and months and years.

So let's don't punish these babies and children for their parents' errors. Instead, let's give them a chance to grow up with a good education and a head start, so they'll be independent, working citizens.

So I say to Speaker Gingrich and to the leaders of the Senate and the House in both parties, let's work together to get this job done. Let's prove to the American people that we can reform welfare, really reform it, without letting this issue divide us. It is time to end welfare as we know it, to put people to work without punishing children.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8 p.m. on April 7 in the Hilton Inn in Sacramento, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 8.

Remarks to the California Democratic Party in Sacramento

April 8, 1995

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you for the wonderful, wonderful welcome. And thank you for the wonderful film. It's nice to see the record out there in a compelling way. Thank you, and bless you.

I guess you all know that this is Bill Press' birthday. We threw him a good party, didn't we? Happy birthday—[*applause*].

I'm delighted to be here with all the officers of the Democratic Party, with Arlene Holt and of course with our Chair, Don Fowler. I thank him for this remarks. Wasn't Barbara Boxer wonderful this morning? I'll tell you, you have no idea what a joy it is to see her in Washington, with all those other politicians kind of tippy-toeing around and trying to be just careful, you know. And there's Barbara every day just right there through the door, the same way every day. I want to think the members of the California delegation who are here, Norm Mineta, Bob Matsui, Vic Fazio, Maxine Waters, Walter Tucker. They have been our friends and our partners. They have worked hard to turn this country around and move it forward and to help California. I thank them. I'm glad to be here with Willie Brown. I was watching him on the television back there, and he was smiling, you know. And I thought, I hope I look half that good when I'm his age. The truth is he already looks younger than me, and I resent it. [*Laughter*] Senator Lockyer, I'm glad to be here with you. And Mayor Serna, thank you for hosting us. [*Applause*] I'm glad to be here with your State controller, Kathleen Connell; your superintendent of education, Delane Eastin; and of course, I love hearing Gray Davis talk. It's nice to know that you're always going to have a Governor, no matter what, and a good one on occasion.

I'm delighted to be here with a number of my California staffers, of course, led by my Chief of Staff, Leon Panetta. I know a lot of you used to be represented by him,

and you're glad to see him. And you all give him a good hand. He doesn't get much of this in Washington, so he needs it. I mean, he needs it. Give him really more. Give him a little more. [*Applause*] Don't overdue it; he might quit and come home. [*Laughter*] That was just about right. Thank you.

I want to also tell you that after we leave here we're going down to Los Angeles, and we're going to have an event with the National Education Association on school violence. So we have representatives here from the national NEA, and our wonderful Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, is also here with me today. And I'd like for you to welcome him.

I was looking at that film, and I don't know how many of you know this, but there was only one moment in that film when I got kind of a twinge and I sort of had to control myself when that picture of me in the academic robe and the tassel, that was at UCLA. [*Laughter*] Well, they won it fair and square, and they deserved it.

I am delighted to be here. You know, you folks believed in the campaign I ran in 1992 well enough to go out and work your hearts out to try to turn the direction of the country and the direction of California around. And we carried this State for the first time a Democratic President had carried it since 1964, and I thank you for that.

I also want to thank you for all of the applause that came out of this audience when the picture of Hillary appeared on the screen. Thank you for that. Hillary and Chelsea have just come home, you know, from a very long trip. They went to India, to Pakistan, to Bangladesh, to Nepal, to Sri Lanka, always looking at the condition of women and young girls in these countries, in that very important part of the world.

You know this in California because you have so many people living here who come from those places. But the future of the globe will be determined in no insignificant measure by what happens in those nations, and the ability to preserve democracy and hope and freedom in those nations depends in no small measure on how women and girls are treated and whether they have the opportunity to live up to their God-given capacities.

My fellow Americans, we are at an historic moment and an interesting time in our history. You know because of what was on that film that I have kept the commitments I've made to the people of California and the people of the United States in the campaign of 1992.

I ran for President because I was deeply concerned about the lives of ordinary Americans, because half of our people were working harder for the same or lower wages than they were making 15 years before, because people were working harder, sleeping less, spending less time with their children, because we had profound problems in the fabric of our society, pressures on the family unit, more and more of our children being born out of wedlock, high rates of crime and violence and drugs, the absence of hope for so many of our people who felt isolated and abandoned. Because the Government seemed to me to be caught in a gridlock where one side could blame the other, but the facts were that we had 12 years of trickle-down economics in which the deficit exploded, investment in our people went down, and nobody was really willing to take on the serious problems of the country. So that most people in their ordinary lives just felt left out. The National Government became less and less and less relevant to their lives, except at tax time when it was a burden. And so I thought we could change that.

I ran for President because I thought our country had three great tasks: First, we needed to begin once again to reestablish the American economic dreams, to grow the middle class, shrink the under class, and create more opportunities for entrepreneurs to live out their dreams. Second, because I thought we needed to reassert the fundamental values that made this country great, responsibility, responsibility in our individual lives, in our work lives, in our family lives, and in our communities, taking responsibility one for another, understanding that we are going up or down together in this country whether we like it or not, so we had better make the most of it. And thirdly, because I thought we ought to reform Government, to make it more relevant and more effective to our daily lives, to do four things: to create more economic opportunity; to shrink the

bureaucracy; to make our people more secure, not only around the world but here at home on our streets and in our schools and in our homes; and most important of all, to empower people through education to make the most of their own lives in the global economy.

Now, in the first 2 years, we have gone a long way toward keeping all those commitments. The economy is up; the deficit is down. We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation this country's had in 25 years in spite of the economic problems that continue to endure in this State, and I'm proud of that.

In California, which was hit hardest by the 1989–90 recession and hit by far harder than any other State by the defense cutbacks, the unemployment rate has now dropped about 2 percent. So we are moving in the right direction in terms of the economy. We're trying to help places that have been left behind with empowerment zones and extra investments in cities that need it.

We are trying to establish community development banks in cities that will loan money to people who previously could never get any money, so we can bring free enterprise into poor areas and give people the promise that they can get a bank loan and start a business and hire their friends and neighbors and get something to happen.

We have plainly shrunk the bureaucracy, something they never thought the Democrats would do. The Democrats reduced the deficit, and the Democrats shrunk the Government bureaucracy by 100,000 in 2 years and put it all into paying for safety on our streets. That's something the Democratic Party did.

My friends, when you go back out of this room and you see people you know who don't belong to the Democratic Party, you just remind them of this: that this Government is the first Government in 30 years that is running an operating surplus, that is, except for the interest on the debt, run up between 1981 and 1982, before our administration took over, our budget would be in balance today. And don't you forget it. And you ought to be proud of that.

The third thing we have done is to make this country more secure. 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. And we have taken on a lot of tough issues to make our world more secure, from North Korea to Northern Ireland to Haiti to Mexico. I've done a lot of things that weren't popular, but they were right, to make this country more secure, to have this country have a better future.

And perhaps most important of all, we really have moved on the education agenda I promised in 1992. We expanded Head Start. We have given more money to our schools to meet high standards. We have supported apprenticeship programs for young people who don't go to college but do want to have good education. We have made over 1.5 million people right here in California alone eligible for lower cost college loans and better repayment terms, so that everybody can go to college who wants to go. And here and throughout the country, our national service program has given 20,000 young people a chance to earn their way to college by serving their communities at the grassroots level in the best, old-fashioned, American tradition. And there are some of them right there.

Now, let's talk about where we are today. You might say, well, if we've got 6.3 million new jobs in the country; the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 25 years; we're making progress in terms of our national security abroad and here at home with the crime bill, the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, 100,000 more police on our streets; if we have shrunk the size of the Federal Government; and if we are doing more for education and that's the central problem of our time, how come they won the last election?

Well, let's talk about it. One reason is we spent too much time working and too little time talking about it. And they're better talkers, and we're better workers. And we ought to give them credit for that. They're great; they say one thing one day and another thing the next, and it doesn't bother them. And they sometimes get rewarded for that. So you can say that's what happened. But that's not really what happened.

What really happened is that this country's economic problems have been building for

20 years, and our country's social problems, tearing at the fabric of orderly life, have been developing for 30 years. And they are clashing against one another in place after place after place. And Government's irresponsibility has been there for more than a decade. And in this new age, a lot of what we do in Washington to help the economy, whether it's bringing the deficit down to get interest rates down so people invest and create jobs or expanding trade so we get more high-wage jobs, those things have an indirect effect on people, not a direct effect on people.

So a lot of people's lives haven't changed. There may be more jobs, but most people haven't gotten a raise. There may be more jobs, but a lot of big companies are still downsizing and making people feel insecure. And a lot of the things that we have done that are good have an indirect effect on people. So in 1994, the people said, "We still feel insecure, we still feel uncertain. We want more done. We want it to happen faster." And they gave the Republicans a chance to control the Congress.

Well, in the last 100 days, the House of Representatives has certainly passed a series of bold initiatives. Of the 10 items on their contract, they passed all but one, term limits, which they didn't really want to pass anyway, now that they're in control. [*Laughter*] And then, in the Senate, one has been defeated, the balanced budget amendment. Two items [*applause*]—two items I was proud to sign into law, because I also campaigned on them in 1992, and I'll talk about that more in a minute.

So here we are now at the beginning of the second 100 days. Now, one of the things we ought to do is to reaffirm what we are as Democrats. Barbara Boxer did that; you cheered; that's good. Don't forget. Don't forget. But we also ought to say, what are we going to do in the next 100 days and beyond? What do you want us to do in Washington, what do we believe we must do, and what should you be doing out here in the country?

Keep in mind—keep in mind the object of this for you is to remind the American people that we've been up there fighting for them and that a lot of these items don't have much to do with their welfare. They won't raise their incomes; they won't educate their kids; they won't create any more jobs; they won't help to bring us together. That is not what is going on here. They basically amount to an attack on Government and an assertion that the private market is always better than anything done by Government.

Now, that is plainly not so. But let me go through these things with you item by item and tell you what I'm going to do on them. And let me remind you that we have an unfinished agenda. We have not yet done everything we pledged to do in 1992. I believe what the country wants us to do is to get up there and try to do something that makes sense that helps ordinary people improve their lives. That's what I think the country wants us to do.

When I ran for President, I wanted to do things to change your life for the better. I did not imagine that I would go there to try to make political points by piling up a stack of vetoes. I still don't want to do that, but I will if I have to. What I want to do is to do what is best for the country.

Now therefore, we have to look at where we are. So let's just go through the items, one by one, on their agenda and on our agenda. Taxes: In 1993, I made a commitment to try to give some tax relief to the middle class. In 1993, the Congress passed our economic plan which ended trickle-down economics, cut the deficit, and invested more in education and economic growth. What happened? We made a down payment on the middle class tax cut. In California today, when people file their taxes, the average tax cut for families of four with incomes of $25,000 a year or less in this State will be $1,000 because of what we did in 1993. We concentrated on that group of people. Why? Because people with modest incomes who work full-time and raise children should not be in poverty. You want welfare reform? Make work pay. Reward people who work.

So I do believe in this recovery. Since most people have not gotten a raise, we ought to have tax relief for people in the middle class so they can feel what is going on in the economy. But this $200 billion tax cut that was passed by the House is a fantasy. We can't afford it, it's not fair. It will be paid for by cutting programs for poor people and for children, and we shouldn't do it. That won't

happen. So the question is, what will happen?

It's also important to remind you that we have to keep bringing that deficit down because that gets interest rates down. That means more money for more people in California to expand the economy, to buy homes, to do the things that have to be done to put this country back together.

So what should we do? First, we ought to target the tax cut to the right people. Give the tax cut to middle class people who are working hard and haven't gotten a raise. Don't give it to people who have done very well in the eighties and the nineties. Their tax bill gives half the aid, half, to the top 10 percent of our people and 20 percent of the aid to the top 1 percent. All of those folks have done real well in the eighties and the nineties. They do not need it. Middle class people whose incomes have been stagnant or declining need help. That's where the tax relief should go.

Second question: What should the money be for? Should we just give people a check and say go blow it? No. We should target the money to things that will grow our economy over the long run and lift people's earnings in the short run and the long run. If you get a tax cut, your income goes up. But will your income go up in the long run? It depends on what the tax cut is for. So I say, target the tax cut to the work that is being done in America that is most important. Target it to raising children and target it to education. Give a tax cut for the cost of education after high school to the American people.

I'll say more about this in a moment, but what is giving rise to all this anxiety behind the affirmative action debate? Because—I'll tell you what it is. The middle class is splitting apart in America. The middle class is splitting apart. This is a big, new development. From the year I was born at the end of World War II until the year I was first elected Governor of my State in 1978, all of us as Americans rose together economically. The income of all groups of Americans roughly doubled from 1950 to 1978, except for people in the lowest group, the lowest 20 percent. And theirs went up even more. So we were going up together, and we were coming together.

What's happened since then? We are splitting apart. Even within the great American middle class, we are splitting apart. Why? In a global economy the fault line is education. Those who have it do well; those who don't get punished. Give a tax break for education, so we can lift the country and put it back together again.

Let's talk about welfare reform. Yesterday the Speaker said he passionately wanted welfare reform. Well, so do I. In 1992, I ran for President with a commitment to end the present welfare system as we know it. In 1994, they put it in their contract. What happened in between? I have given 25 States, half of this country, permission to pursue welfare reform on their own initiatives. And I gave Congress the most comprehensive welfare reform ever presented.

What do I want to do? I want to promote work and responsible parenting and tough child support enforcement. That's what I want to promote. I want these young parents who made a mistake to have a chance to put their lives back on track. And I want these children to have a better future. Now, that's what's really important.

So I take up that challenge. Let's go do welfare reform. But look what's in the House bill. I agree that there should be time limits, if there's a job at the end of the road. I agree we should let the States have more flexibility, because the problems are different from State to State. And I am gratified that the House took all of our tough child support enforcement provisions, including yanking driver's licenses and professional licenses from people who owe money for their kids and they won't pay.

But I do not agree with the rest of the bill because primarily it is designed to save money to pay for the tax cuts by cutting aid to welfare. We should cut aid to welfare by genuinely, honestly reducing the welfare rolls by putting people to work, so they can be good parents and good workers. That's the way to cut the welfare budget.

As compared with our support, theirs is weak on work and tough on kids. It ought to be the reverse. That's what ought to happen. Let me give you an example. Their bill says, no welfare if someone has a child before the age of 18 for the mother or the child

at least until they become 18. If the State doesn't want to give them any money ever, that's fine. I just think that's wrong. Why punish the child for the sins of the parents?

You know, you look across this State or Nation, a baby is a baby. You know, in my little Baptist Sunday school class we used to sing a song, ''Yellow, brown, black, or white, they are precious in His sight.'' In or out of wedlock, those kids are going to grow up someday. They're going to be in Stanford, Berkeley, or San Quentin, or someplace in between. You think about it. They're going to be in Stanford, Berkeley, San Quentin, or someplace in between. They're going to be in prison; they're going to be in university; they're going to be in someplace in between. And whether they are or not is due in part to what we do and how we behave. Let us not punish the children and cut off our own nose to spite our face in this welfare reform. [*Applause*] Thank you.

And as to the parents, think of this. What good does it do to punish somebody for a mistake they have already made? If you have a child, better to say to the child, ''Now things will change. You must be a responsible parent. You must be a student. You must be a worker. You must become independent. We want you to succeed as a citizen, as a worker, as a parent.'' So I don't have any problem at all with having tough requirements on children. But the tough requirements should be designed to give the child a chance to grow into responsible adulthood, to be a productive citizen. So let's be tough, but let's be smart. Let's do something that makes sense.

Senator Boxer talked about cutting the deficit. I'm glad they want to cut the deficit. We cut it $600 billion in the first 2 years without a lick of help from them, so I'd be glad to have some help.

When we did the deficit cutting before, they were AWOL. I was told the first week I became President by their leader in the Senate, ''There will be no votes, none, for your deficit reduction package, none. We'll give you not one. We don't believe in imposing any tax increases on the wealthiest Americans, and we just want you to be out there. And if it succeeds, you can get credit, but we'll blame you anyway and call it a tax bill.'' That's the first week I was President, that's what they told me.

Well, we did it anyway, because it was right for the country. We—[*inaudible*]—some political heat because it was right for the country, and that's why we have 6.3 million jobs today. And you ought to go out of this hall and remind people that that's what we did and that's what we're going to do in the future.

But nonetheless, we're here where we are today, and the country would be better off if we could figure out a humane and smart way to reduce the deficit. So I say to the Republicans: Let's work on making sensible cuts, not partisan cuts. Let's don't do something that's really foolish. I don't think it helps us to cut our children. I don't want to cut immunizations or school lunches or infant formulas or nutrition programs. I can't imagine what good that will do.

In their budget, two-thirds of the cuts come out of the poorest people in the country who get only 5 percent of the benefit of their proposed tax cuts. You don't have to be a genius to figure out what happens to the fabric in America and our need to give everybody a chance at a fair shot at the American dream. It is not fair, and it is not in our interest to do that. So let us not make those cuts. That is wrong, it is unfair, it is unnecessary.

And let me give you an example. I want to compliment Senator Boxer and Senator Feinstein. We just had a big debate in Washington on the so-called rescission bill. Now, the rescission bill is a bill that cuts the present budget, the one that we adopted last year, to get savings to pay for our California earthquake aid and our California flood aid and to pay for some other investments we have to make and to reduce the deficit a little more. I was open to that. But the House-passed bill had terrible cuts in it. They cut education. They cut child nutrition. They cut the environment. They cut housing. They gutted the national service program. A lot of it was politics and ideology. It was extremist.

I insisted on restoring some more cuts. The Senate Republicans were even embarrassed by some of the things they did, and they put some back in. And then we said, ''Put the other cuts back for the kids. Restore

them. We'll give you some better cuts.'' And Senator Boxer and every Democrat in the Senate refused to let the bill come for a vote until they did it. They did it. It was sensible. It passed 99–0 because of Barbara Boxer and the other Senate Democrats, 99–0. So I can tell you that it would work. It would work.

Political reform. The two bills I've signed are political reform bills. One applies to Congress the laws they put on the private sector; I'm for that. The other limits the ability of Congress to impose on State and local governments mandates they don't help pay for; I'm for that, and I'll bet your legislators are, too. But there's more to political reform than that. We need campaign finance reform, and we sure need lobby reform.

I'll guarantee you—you heard Barbara Boxer talk about this—when the Congress takes out a bill that will raise $3.2 billion over 10 years simply by telling billionaires, ''Look, if you make a lot of money in our country as Americans, you can't get out of paying the tax that you owe on the money you made as an American by renouncing your citizenship before the tax bills are due.'' And it was put in, and then they took it out.

Now believe me, that was not an act of total charity. Somebody lobbied for that, hard, carefully, secretly. And I think the American people are entitled to know. I think the American people are entitled to know.

So I applaud them for what they've done, but let's go the rest of the way. Let's give the American people what they really need, which is lobby reform, campaign finance reform, and an even shot in every election to have the will of the people manifested.

Let's talk about regulations. You know, they cuss regulations. Well, all of you can cuss regulations. I bet there's not a soul here that can't think of one stupid thing that was at least done to you at one time by the State, the Federal, or a local government. Everybody can tell a story that would make you believe the Government would mess up a one-car parade. That's the staple of American life. But the answer is to fix it, not to stop Government from regulating what it ought to.

We have done what we could to fix it. Let me give you an example. Our Environmental Protection Agency Director, Carol Browner, has set up a compliance center. If you're a small business person and you're worried, ''Am I out of compliance with the environmental laws,'' if you call and ask for help in good faith, you cannot be fined for 6 months, because we know that you're trying to do better.

We now give our people the right to waive fines for any first-time violators if they're doing it in good faith. We now give our people the right to tell people, instead of being fined, why don't you keep this money if you will spend it to fix the problem that you've got in the first place, clean the environment.

So we're going to cut 20 million hours of paperwork burden out of the American people's time next year in dealing with the EPA. That's fine. But if they send me a bill that lets unsafe planes fly or contaminated meat be sold or contaminated water get into the city water systems, I will veto it, because we need to do that. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Look at this—let me give you some other examples. Look at the crime bill. Everybody is against crime. Anybody who is for crime, please stand up. [*Laughter*] And it's a very serious issue. It's a very serious issue. I never will forget when I was doing one of my town meetings in northern California, looking at that young man who changed schools with his brother because they were so terrified at the school they were in. And when they were standing in line to register at the new school, a crazy gunman walked in the school and shot his brother standing in line—somebody he didn't even know.

This is a big deal. And it's part of the volatility in our country today. People feel if we can't even be safe, is there no discipline, is there no control, is there no direction in our society? This is an important thing.

Well, after 6 years of political posturing, we passed the crime bill last year. All the law enforcement agencies in the country supported it. It had stronger punishments, including a ''three strikes and you're out'' law. It had more money for prisons if States had strong sentencing provisions. But it also had money for 100,000 police, for community policing of the kind that we have seen actually lowers the crime rate, because, after all, that's our objective, isn't it? We want a safer society. We want to lower the crime rate.

And it had money for prevention, to give our young people something to say yes to as well as no to. It was a balanced, balanced bill. And it was a joy to sign.

Now, they say they want their crime bill and they want to be even tougher on crime. Well, I say if they send me a bill that repeals 100,000 police or repeals the assault weapons ban, I will veto that bill because that is wrong. But if they have some good ideas that will allow us to build on last year's crime bill to be more effective in making people safer, we would be wrong to turn away from it. We would be wrong to turn away from it.

Crime should not be a Republican or Democratic issue. It was not a partisan issue last year until we got right up to the campaign and they saw that they could twist it around and turn it into a pork argument. They had been supporting the effort all along. And we should not do to the American people what they did to the American people to get a few votes in last November's election. This should not be a partisan issue. When somebody gets killed or robbed or raped, I don't care what their political party is, it is wrong. And all of us should say, ''We don't want this to be a political issue. We'll work with you, but don't tear down what we've done.''

Let's talk abut environmental protection. I've already said I want to ease the burden of foolish regulation. But I do not want and I will not tolerate the compromise of any effort to clean our water or our air or to clean up our toxic waste dumps. That, too, would be wrong. The environment cannot protect itself. It requires effort. The California Desert Protection Act was a good example of the effort. In implementing environmental protection it requires sensible compromise.

I'm proud of the fact that previous administrations just let everybody fight, but we hammered out a compromise dealing with the old-growth timber in the Pacific Northwest. We handed out a compromise that we hammered out dealing with the farmers and the environmentalists over the use of water here in California. We've been able to work out some compromises dealing with the Endangered Species Act so that responsible developers can do their work in California. We should not be immune to compromise. A lot of these acts can be implemented in a way that defies common sense. But we should not, we should not sit on the sidelines and watch the work that has been done by Republicans and Democrats together for 25 years to protect the environment of America, be wiped away with some ill-advised laws overnight.

Let me give you one example. If that law, which was passed by the House, the so-called Takings bill, which would require the Government to pay property owners billions of dollars every time we act to defend our natural heritage of seashores and wetlands and open spaces, were to pass, it would either tie our hands in the environment or bankrupt the budget. If that is the law in States throughout the country, what it means is that local Governments have to give up zoning altogether. This same provision has been on the ballot in 20 States and has been defeated every time, even in conservative Republican States.

In Arizona, the bill the House just passed was on the ballot last November, in Arizona, hardly a bastion of the Democratic Party, and it was defeated 60–40. Now that's how extremist this legislation is. Now the people don't have a vote on this bill, but I do, and I say, no, it will not become the law of the land.

Let me say something else that most Americans don't care much about today, but I want you to think about it, and that's our foreign policy. The House passed a so-called peacekeeping bill that would restrict the ability of the United States to cooperate with the United Nations in solving the problems of this old world. Well, the U.N. is 50 years old this year, and it's going to be a big celebration out here of that. But it's only 4 or 5 years old in terms of a real force for peacekeeping, because the cold war and Soviet vetoes kept it from being what it could have been for a long time. Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, Dwight Eisenhower and Senator Vandenberg, Republicans and Democrats alike, always believed the United Nations could be a force for peace and that the United States would be a partner in that.

Now there are those who say that we're oppressed, we're mistreated in the U.N., everything's terrible, we should just walk away.

Folks, they're wrong. They're just wrong. What we did in Haiti was a noble thing and a good thing. But for all of our frustrations in Bosnia, the United Nations troops on the ground there—none of them American—are risking their lives to minimize the slaughter. They're doing it; they don't ask us for our troops. All we do is to supply them food and medicine, and our ships are there, our planes are there to help them in case they get in trouble. It would be wrong for us not to support them when they are there, putting their lives on the line, trying to keep people alive.

I know at a time when we have so many problems here at home it is easy to say let's just walk away from this. But we are a great country, and the world looks to us for leadership. We must not let this kind of thing stand.

So these are the things that are in the contract. I will work on welfare reform. I will work on crime. I will work on regulatory reform. I will work on tax cuts. I will work on deficit reduction with the Republicans. But my idea of cutting spending in the Agriculture Department is to close 1,200 offices; that's what we did, not to cut the school lunch program.

So I say to you, when you leave here and you see people you know who aren't ardent Democrats like us, say to them, ''We're not against deficit reduction; we're not against tax cuts; we're not against welfare reform. We want America to be a safer place. We want our streets and our schools and our own homes to be safer, but let's don't go too far. Let's don't be extreme. Let's remember that we've got to put the American people first; we've got to put the future of this country first. And we've gotten past the first 100 days; now, let's roll up our sleeves and do something that makes sense. Otherwise, we'll have to say no. Better to say yes to our future, but better to say no than to go to an extreme which we will regret for the rest of our lives.''

Now, I also ask for your support for three other things. They are unfinished agenda from the New Covenant that I ran on. One is, we've got to do something about health care. Now, I am well aware that by the time the interest groups and our political adversaries got through spending $300 billion to tell the American people how lousy my ideas were, reverse plastic surgery had been performed on them. [*Laughter*] And I am well aware of the fact that the American people believe that I bit off more than I could chew in the bill I sent to Congress last year.

But I also have not forgotten the fact that we got over 1 million letters, Hillary and I did, from people who had heartbreaking problems, that there are people every year who have to give up more and more coverage because of the cost of health care, that there are millions of people who don't have any health insurance, that we are the only wealthy country in the entire world where there's a smaller percentage of people today with health insurance than people who had it 10 years ago. Nobody else has this problem, only us, because we refuse to deal with it.

So let's take it one step at a time. Let's say, you cannot lose your health insurance when you change jobs. Let's make the benefits portable. Let's say that a family ought to be able to get health insurance even if somebody in the family has been sick. Preexisting conditions preventing people from getting health insurance is wrong. Let's say that every State ought to have a huge pool where all small business people and farmers and self-employed people can buy health insurance for the same price as those of us who work for government or big corporations can buy it. And let's expand home care for the elderly and the disabled, so that they don't have to spend themselves into poverty and go into a nursing home to get any decent care. We can afford to do this.

My fellow Americans, we can afford to do this without raising taxes and without expanding the deficit, while lowering the deficit. We can do these things. So let's ask them to do it. And let's do two more things. Let's ask the Republicans to start acting like Republicans used to act and join with us as Democrats and raise the minimum wage.

They say they want to index tax rates to protect against inflation, which mostly helps the wealthiest people. And they want to guard the defense budget against inflation, and I respect that. The only people they don't want to protect against inflation are the people that are getting hurt worst by it.

You know, you cannot raise a child on $8,500 a year anymore. You just can't do it. And if we don't raise the minimum wage this

year, next year the minimum wage will be at its lowest value in 40 years. Now, we're going around telling everybody, get off welfare, go to work, we're going to extol the work ethic, we're creating 6 million new jobs. Is your version of post-cold-war America, is your version of a high-technology information age one in which minimum wage workers make their lowest income in 40 years? Not mine. Let's raise it, and let's ask them to help us.

Finally, let's ask them to reduce the deficit without cutting education. Let's say instead we should increase education. We should increase education. Do you really seriously believe that California is going to be stronger 10 years from now because of all the hits education has taken out here in the last few years?

Audience Members. No-o-o!

The President. Nobody does. Nobody does. You know, they used to attack us and say, ''Oh, the Democrats are indiscriminate. They just want to spend more money on everything.'' Well, that's not true anymore. We cut 300 programs. I've asked the Congress to cut 400 more or consolidate them. I don't want to spend more money on everything. I want to spend more money on the right things. They want to spend less money on everything. Neither extreme is right. The right thing to do is to say education is the fault line in the modern world; if you want the American dream, if you want the middle class to grow, if you want us to go up and down together, we had better get every last person in this country a decent education. And we had better not walk away from it.

You imagine this. Imagine what California would have been like when all these layoffs started occurring if we had had the GI bill for America's workers that I proposed. Take all these Federal training programs, put them in a block of money, and send a check to the unemployed worker for 2 years, say, ''Go out and get your training. Do not sit where you are. We will help you pay for 2 years of education for a lifetime.'' We're going to have to do this if we want America to grow. We're going to have to do it.

Let me close with a few words on this affirmative action issue and know where we are as Democrats. Let me speak. Don't scream, let's talk. That's just what they want us to do. They want to get this country into a screaming match. They win the screaming matches; we win the conversations.

You already heard what Barbara Boxer said about the incomes. We know that. We know there's still disparity in incomes. I'm really proud of the fact that under my administration the African-American unemployment rate is below 10 percent for the first time in 20 years. But there's still a big disparity. But there's still a disparity. Right? So we know that.

Let me tell you something else. There are still things in the human heart in this country that we're not totally aware of that affect our decisions. I'm old enough to remember that when I was still a young man first starting to vote, there were county courthouses on courthouse squares in my part of the country and in my State that still had restrooms marked ''white'' and ''colored,'' in my lifetime, when I was as old as those young people out there.

Now, we have made great progress in the last 30 years. But we still don't all, any of us, understand fully what is in all of our hearts about all these complex issues of gender and race. Let me say something for all the people that are pushing for this. This is psychologically a difficult time for a lot of white males, the so-called angry white males. Why? Because those who don't have great educations and who aren't in jobs which are growing, even though they may have started out ahead of those of you who are female and of different races, most of them are working harder for less money than they were making 15 years ago.

Imagine what it's like for them, just for a moment, to go home at night when they're my age, and they're nearly 50, and they think, ''Gosh, when I was 20 I thought the whole world was before me. I thought by the time I was 50 I'd have three or four kids, I'd be sending them all to college, my retirement would be secure, we'd have a good life.'' Now they've been working for 15 years without a raise, and they think they could be fired at any time. And they go home to dinner, and they look across the table at their families, and they think they've let them down. They think somehow, what did I do wrong?

It's pretty easy for people like that to be told by somebody else in the middle of a political campaign with a hot 30-second ad, ''You didn't do anything wrong; they did it to you.'' But what I want you to understand is, that doesn't make their feelings any less real. You maybe aggrieved. Somebody may have been discriminatory against you, but that doesn't make their feelings any less real, either.

I got a letter the other day from a guy I went to grade school with. He was a very poor boy. He grew up and became an engineer. He worked over 20 years for a Fortune 500 company. They had a good year last year; they made a bunch of money. They laid off three of their engineers, gave their work to two others who were younger and less well-paid. And they trumpeted the fact that one of the other people was a minority. This guy wrote me a letter saying, ''Mr. President, I'm glad you ordered a review of those programs, and I'm glad you didn't abandon them.'' But he said, ''You have to understand what a lot of people are feeling out here is what I'm feeling. Three of us who are 50-year-old white males got fired. Now, they got rid of us because they wanted to cut their salary costs and cut their future health care and retirement costs. And the fact that we'd given over 20 years to our company didn't mean anything. There was no affirmative action reason they got rid of us. But it's easy for people like us to believe that's why it happened, because people then say, well, look at us, we're doing better on another front.''

What I'm telling you, folks, is that what we have done to give more opportunities to women and minorities is a very good thing. And we should not stop doing that. But—and I'll give you three examples that I talk about all across the country that I'm proud of that prove that what we're doing is right.

If you look at the United States military, the United States Army not only produced General Powell, it produced a lot of other African-American generals and a lot of Hispanic generals. I was with a retired African-American general in Dallas yesterday who is phenomenally successful in business now in leading the fight to preserve the national service movement in Texas, because he sees it as giving young people the kind of opportunity that he got in the Army. And nobody in America thinks that's a bad thing.

But they do make a special effort to make sure every time there's a promotion pool that it reflects the racial and gender makeup of the people in the rank just below. No unqualified person ever gets promoted, but they do really work hard to make sure that people's innate abilities get developed and that they're there and they get a chance. And it's made a difference.

I'll give you another example. The Small Business Administration under my administration last year increased loans to minorities by over two-thirds, to women by over 80 percent, but didn't increase loans to white men. And we didn't make a single loan to an unqualified person. We gave people who never had a chance before a chance to get in business. I'm proud of that. We didn't hurt anybody.

Look at the appointments our administration has made to Federal judgeships. Look at them. We have appointed more women and minorities to the Federal bench than the past three Presidents, one Democrat and two Republicans, combined. But you know what I'm really proud of? We have by far the largest percentage of judges rated well-qualified by the American Bar Association. We did the right thing giving people a chance.

So we have to keep working on this, but we have to realize that there is a real problem out there in this country. We can't deny that. There are a lot of people who go home every night and look across the table at their families and think that either they have failed or they have been stuck by somebody treating them unfairly. That is what we must respond to.

What the people who want to use this issue out here for political gain hope is that we will get in a big old shouting match with them, and they'll have more people on their side of the shouting match than we will, and it'll be a wedge, and they will drive it right through the stake of progressive efforts in the State and in this Nation.

And what we need here is what I've tried to do in Washington. We need to evaluate all these programs, we need to defend without any apology whatever anything we're

doing that is right and decent and just that lifts people up, that lifts people up.

But we do not—we do not need to say that we're insensitive to what's going on in these other people's lives. We do not need to say that we are for people who are unqualified getting Government-mandated benefits over people who are. And we do not need to shrink as Democrats when we think there has been a case, however rare, of reverse discrimination. We entered a lawsuit, our Justice Department did, on behalf of a young, white man at Southern Illinois University who was told he couldn't even apply for a public job because he was the wrong gender and the wrong race. Now, that's clearly wrong.

So what we need to do is to say to these people—and what you ought to do in California—you can do it—you need to say, look, look around this room here. We're living in a global society. Does anybody seriously believe that we'd be better off if we were divided by race and gender? Look at this room. California, when you get through this terrible downturn caused by the military cutbacks, is once again going to become the engine of America's economy in large measure because of your diversity. Because of your diversity. And everything we do to empower people, everything we do to empower people to contribute—when you empower people with disabilities to work and to be self-sufficient, you strengthen the rest of us. When we empower Native Americans through letting them have more economic power, more say over their own tribal affairs, that helps the rest of us because more people live up to their God-given capacity. That's important. When we find every person we can—however poor, however different, wherever they are—and give them a chance to become what they ought to be, we're all better off.

So we can use this occasion for a great national conversation. We don't have to retreat from these affirmative action programs that have done great things for the American people and haven't hurt other people. We don't. But we do have to ask ourselves, are they all working? Are they all fair? Has there been any kind of reverse discrimination? And more importantly, what we really ought to ask ourselves is, what are we going to do about all these folks that are out there working hard and never getting ahead. That's what the middle class tax cut is all about.

What are we going to do? What are we going to do about all these people who are being riffed by these big companies and by the Federal Government—although our severance package is much more humane—what are we going to do about these people in middle age who are being told, ''Thank you very much for the last 25 years, but goodbye, goodbye before your full pension vests, goodbye 15 years before you can draw your pension. Goodbye to your nice health care package for yourself and your family. Goodbye to your future raises.'' What are we going to do for them?

Use this opportunity to tell people that we have to do this together. I'm pleading with you, stand up for the affirmative action programs that are good, that work, that bring us together, but don't do it in a way that gives them a cheap political victory. Do it in a way that reaches out and brings people in and says we care about you, too. Don't do it in a way that gives them a cheap political victory.

Now, I want to read you something. I want to read you something, and then I'm done. I got a letter—I got a great little poster. I had two posters greeting me when I came in from my morning run, one from a local kindergarten and one from the Bowling Green Charter School Number 8, Sacramento, California. And these children had written in their little handprints the virtues they were being taught in school. I want you to listen to these. These are what we are teaching our children: cooperation, respect, patience, caring, sense of humor, common sense, friendship, responsibility, flexibility, effort, creativity, initiative, communication, problem-solving, integrity, perseverance.

You know what? No place in there, this list of what we are teaching our children about how they ought to live is—demonize people that aren't like you, look for ways to divide people one from another, take a quick victory if you can by making people angry at one another. We do not practice our lives as citizens the way we teach our children to live, the way we try to run our families, the way we try to run our workplaces.

Now, that's what I'm asking you to do. Go out of here and engage these people and say, "Listen, we are moving this economy, we're moving on the problems of the country, we're changing the way the Government works, but we had better behave as citizens the way we try to teach our children to behave as human beings and the way we try to run the rest of our lives." You do that, and the Democrats are coming back.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. at the Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Don Fowler, chairman, Democratic National Committee; Bill Press, chairman, and Arlene Holt, first vice chair, California Democratic Party; Willie L. Brown, Jr., California State Assembly speaker; and Bill Lockyer, California State Senate president pro tem.

Remarks at the National Education Association School Safety Summit in Los Angeles, California

April 8, 1995

Thank you. Thank you for your welcome. Thank you for your work. Thank you for that very moving film. Thank you, Keith Geiger, for your introduction and for your outstanding leadership of this organization. You know, Keith Geiger is quite a gardener, and it's quite a beautiful day. It shows you how devoted he is that he's even inside, much less giving a speech. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Dick Riley, for such a wonderful job as Secretary of Education and for those fine remarks. Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, I'm delighted to see you. We're a little out of place here today. It's actually a pretty good time to be in Washington, DC. The cherry blossoms are out—and so is Congress. [*Laughter*] It's a pretty good time to be there. [*Laughter*] I know there are a lot of Los Angeles county supervisors and city council members here today, and I see your distinguished police chief. I know there are other—[*applause*]—and I thank you for being here, sir.

I also know that this is not just a gathering of teachers. There are a lot of school support folks here and parents and police officers and concerned citizens about a subject that I care a great deal about as you could see from the film that was put together by the NEA.

Shortly before the New Hampshire primary in 1992, I was walking in a hotel one night in New York, and some of you may remember, since you helped me, that I was not doing very well then, and my political obituary was being written over and over again. [*Laughter*] "Will he fall into single digits in New Hampshire, or will he hang on at 11 percent?" And I was feeling pretty sorry for myself. And we were having this big fundraiser in New York, and for all I knew, there wouldn't be three people there. And they took me in the back way, you know, and I walked through the kitchen, totally preoccupied with my own problems.

And all of a sudden this gentleman who was working in the hotel came up to me and said, "Governor, my boy, who is 10, he studies politics in the school, and he says I should vote for you." "So," he says, "I'm going to vote for you." "But" he said, "I want you to do something for me." I said, "What is it?" He said, "I want you to make my boy free."

I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "Well, I came here from another country, and we were very poor there, but at least we were free." He said, "Now we live in a place where we have a park across the street, but my boy can't go to the park unless I go with him to protect him. We have a neighborhood school that's just down the street, but my boy can't go to school unless I walk with him. If my boy is not safe, he is not free. So, if I vote for you as he asks, will you make my boy free?"

And the first thing I felt, frankly, was shame that I was preoccupied with my own problems. And the second thing I thought was, you know, how can we have learning in this country until our children are free?

Now, we're having this huge debate in Washington about what the role of Government ought to be. Yesterday at the American Newspaper Editors Association in Dallas, I had a chance to say where I stood on the issues remaining, both in the Republican contract and in the New Covenant that I ran on in 1992.

We know that we have a lot of economic challenges, that we have to grow the middle