rats that were stimulated had a profound effect, once those brains of those rats were dissected. And it's something else to know that the Life Foundation has become extremely interested in because I'm a mother of six and grandmother of nine. This is the future. And these rats that were not stimulated became violent, did not live as long; and brains, when dissected, were atrophied, versus the brains of the rats who lived in a stimulating environment, lived a longer life, were more productive in every way, and had brains with arteries that were clear to the brain and obviously were happier rats.

So, therefore, it goes to say that the children—our children that are being warehoused, this is a very big problem in America, and I really believe that it's not just the Government's obligation and responsibility to take care of these children and to help out. It's our responsibility as well.

The President. Well, let me say it's both our responsibilities. And given that the budget realities of where we are now, that's the way it has to be attacked. But very briefly, this year Hillary and I hosted two conferences at the White House. One was on early childhood and brain development and the other one, last week, was on child care.

We now know, scientists know that an enormous percentage of the brain's capacity develops in the first 3 years of life. We also know that children in supportive environments, whether it's from their parents or in a child care facility where they get not only love and affection, but I mean, actually stimulating environments, have an average of 700,000 positive interactions in their first 4 years of life. Children who are left to sit in front of a television, even by a loving parent, or at a child care center where they're not being stimulated, have an average of 150,000 positive interactions in the first 4 years of life—700,000 to 150,000, while the infrastructure of the brain is being developed. It's not rocket science.

Now, the child care thing—the basic fundamental problem is lower income parents spend as much as 25 percent of their income on child care. And if you want to raise the standards for the child care centers and make sure that a higher percentage of them have more stimulating educational programs, the money has to come from somewhere. Now, we may be able to increase the child care tax credit. I'm working on some options of things we can do. We can help to actually fund the training of more child care workers. But we also have to do more to make child care, that is quality care, affordable. It's a huge issue for the country.

Q. I'd like—if we could, I know that you're having a little problem with your voice——

The President. [*Inaudible*]—to lose my voice. I lost it once. It was pretty scary. [*Laughter*]

Q. ——ask that you sort of try to—I know you'd like to go on—but if we could call off the questions now if you don't mind, Mr. President——

The President. Thank you. I enjoyed being with you. Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Harriet and Jerome Zimmerman and Sidney and Dorothy Kohl, luncheon cohosts. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Boca Raton, Florida

October 31, 1997

Thank you very much. You may or may not have already noticed that I don't exactly have all my vocal capacities. The good news is you'll get a shorter speech. [*Laughter*] The bad news is you'll have to listen harder to what does come out.

I want to start by thanking John and Peggy for bringing us into their magnificent home and even more for their commitment, which was so powerfully expressed in what John said.

You know, I tell people all the time that I have been in public life now almost continuously since 1974. I have been in public office all but 2 years for the last 20 years. Most of the people I've known in politics were good, honest people who worked a lot harder than they had to work and fought for what they believed in and tried to make this

country a better place. And I really appreciated what you said about those Members of Congress.

Even our friends on the Republican side, when that pitched battle we had over the Contract With America, virtually all of them really believed they were doing the right thing. But I didn't, and Mr. Gephardt didn't, and Mr. Frost didn't, and the other Members of Congress who are here—Congressman Deutsch, Congressman Kennedy, Congressman Baldacci—we didn't. And we won.

But you don't work like that, under those kinds of conditions, if you don't feel it. And I must tell you, John, that it means a lot just to know it got across to somebody, because we're very well aware of the presentation that's given to the American people about people in public life, the nature of the political process, and then even the nature of fundraising.

To hear people tell it, the very act of getting people to support you is somehow suspect. You just described your activities in Washington, and I must tell, that's consistent with probably more than 80 percent of the people who help us. And if the others have something they want to talk to us about, well, that's democracy, too, and there is nothing wrong with it. So I thank you very much.

I want to thank Dick Gephardt and his legion in the House, first for the help they gave me in 1993 when we passed the economic plan which was principally responsible for reducing the deficit by 90 percent, without a single vote from a Republican Member in the Senate or the House, not a single, solitary one. Before this new balanced budget law, which I'm very proud of—but before it takes effect, don't forget the deficit dropped from $290 billion to $22.6 billion because of what a lot of brave people in our caucus did in 1993. And a lot of them lost their seats because of it, because the benefits were not apparent by the '94 election. And it made me more proud than ever to be a member of the Democratic Party.

There were a lot of other things that were done, thanks to the leadership that the Democrats here gave us. In 1994 we passed a crime bill, bitterly opposed by the leadership of the other party. They said it was all wrong. They went out in rural areas and tried to convince people we were going to take their guns away. And again, they cost us a few seats. We had some Members in Congress who gave up their seats to vote for 100,000 police, to vote for the Brady bill, to vote for the ban on assault weapons. But we've had 5 years of steeply dropping crime rates, and now we know whether we were right or they were right. The voters didn't know in 1994, but we were right.

And the President gets the credit. When the economy is up, the President gets the credit. John Kennedy thought it was fair. He said, "Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan." So if it goes down, I'll be here, folks. [*Laughter*]

But that plan could not have been passed without the support of our people in Congress. The crime bill could not have been passed without the support of our people in Congress. We wouldn't have the right kind of welfare reform bill without the support of our people in Congress because I had to veto two bills first to get the one I wanted. We had record—3 million plus people move from welfare to work.

And I'm very proud of what these members of this caucus have done. I'm also proud that we got caught trying to provide health insurance to people in America who don't have it. You know, our opponents said when we tried to pass the health insurance program in 1994, they said, you know, "If you support the President's health insurance program, the number of people without health insurance will go up." And as one Democrat said to me the other day. "I supported your program. We got beat, but I supported it. And they were right; the number of uninsured people went up." And now we're trying to do something about that. In the last budget, we got funds to give health insurance coverage to half the children in America who don't have it.

But I want to make it clear, even with a Republican majority in Congress, nothing I do would take place without support of our caucus in the Congress. Do you believe that this balanced budget would have the biggest increase in health care for poor children since 1965 if it weren't for enough Democrats who could support my veto? Do you believe, for example, that we would have, for

the first time in the history of the country, in this budget, opened the doors of college to everybody, literally, with a $1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, tax credits for the other years, better loan programs, more scholarships, more work-study funds, education IRA's? It happened because we were together and we worked together.

So I'm grateful, and you can see—I'd like it very much if we could win 11, 12, 20, 30 more seats. What are the stakes, though? Let's talk about this. What are the stakes, and what are the chances? Why is the country working now?

First of all, when I started running for President 6 years ago, I basically was driven by two things. The first reason was, I didn't really think the country had a plan for the 21st century. It's a big, complicated country, and I thought we were just going to kind of wander into a new millennium, and I didn't believe we were very well-prepared.

The second reason was, I thought the debate in Washington was downright counterproductive, and that our Democrats had turned into sort of cardboard cutouts of real people, just what you were talking about. They said we were weak on defense and weak on welfare and weak on crime and couldn't be trusted with tax money and all that stuff they said about us. And as a result, it sort of relieved people of the burden of having to think, because if they made us unacceptable, particularly in races for President, well, then the voters didn't have to think. I think that's why folks in the other party get so mad at me sometimes. We've gotten the American people to thinking again. [*Laughter*] They're not on automatic anymore.

For example, why should we have had this old debate on the budget: Are we going to explode the deficit with tax cuts or just have a little smaller deficit with spending? So I said, ''Vote for me, and we'll cut the deficit and spend more money on education.'' And people said, ''Yeah, right.'' But that's exactly what we've done, and it worked, because we're Democrats.

Take the crime debate. Every time you read about crime, it was to hear the way they had framed it: ''You've got to be tough on crime.'' ''Well, what do you mean by that?'' ''Put everybody in jail longer.'' And, ''The other guys, they just want to let them out because they're soft-hearted.'' So we said—I said, ''I don't know anybody who thinks like that, not a single living soul.'' So we said, ''Why don't we find the people who really deserve to be in prison longer and keep them, and spend more time trying to keep our kids out of prison and take these guns off the street and out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them?'' And it worked, we put the police on the streets. This was not rocket science. This was the way people think out here in the real world when they're not being presented in artificial terms from a long way away.

On welfare, the debate was structured as: ''All these people on welfare, they don't want to work, and we're tough. We're going to make them work.'' And the other side, our side, was, ''Well, that's probably right, but we feel so bad about the kids we don't want to do it.'' I didn't know a single living soul who really thought that way. And I'd spent a lot of time in welfare offices. I never met anybody on welfare who didn't want to go to work.

So we said, ''Okay, make people who are able-bodied go to work, but get them the education and training, and let's don't hurt their children because their most important job is raising their children. Provide the child care for the children. Provide the medical care for the children. Then you can be tough on work and good to the kids.'' Guess what? It worked. Why? Not because it was rocket science. It was common sense, mainstream values, thinking about tomorrow, and getting away from the hot air.

Same thing on the environment. I believe in preserving the environment. I've worked hard on the Florida Everglades. We've got an agreement in this Interior bill to save the Yellowstone Park from gold mining and to save a bunch of the Redwood forests that are precious, and there are not many of them left in California.

But I always thought it was crazy—you know, they said, ''Well, the environment is nice, but we've got to grow the economy.'' And then we were made to look like sort of blissed-out tree huggers who never got over the McCarthy campaign. [*Laughter*] And that wasn't consistent with my experience. It

looked to me like, for example, if we had a really sensible economy, we could organize it in a way that would promote a clean environment and create more jobs, not fewer jobs.

They said when we tried to take—and this was before my time—we took CFC's out of the atmosphere to stop the hole in the ozone layer. Have any of you missed them? Do you know the name of anybody who has lost a job because of it? But the hole over the ozone layer is shrinking, and the layer is thickening, and it's good for your children and grandchildren.

We had all these coal-fired powerplants that were putting out a lot of sulphur dioxide and making acid rain. The Democrats in Congress—before my time—the Democrats in Congress authorized a trading system so that the free market could trade permits to allow the most efficient way to take the sulphur dioxide out of the atmosphere. We're 40 percent ahead of schedule at less than half the projected cost because the Democrats found a way for the free market to clean the environment and grow the economy. That's our policy, and that's what we intend to do in the future. And it's the right thing to do.

I say this because I think it is terribly important that we look to the future. I'm glad the economy is in good shape. We learned at the last—over the last—this year, this quarter, compared to last year, we grew at 3.5 percent. We've got the lowest inflation since 1964. That's good.

But we've got more to do. Not everybody who needs a job has one. Not everybody who is losing jobs in the technological changes and the trade flows is getting the kind of training that he or she needs to move on with their lives. We've go more to do on the economy. Dick talked about education. We need desperately to have national standards in education, and we need to measure whether our children are measuring up. And we ought to give them more choice in the public schools they attend.

I want every grade school kid in America to go to a school like the one I visited in Jupiter today, the one I should have visited a few months ago before I hurt myself.

We've got more to do. We've got more to do in so many areas. And if you think about it, our Democrats are not vulnerable anymore to the old cardboard pictures they painted of us, not just because of me or the Vice President but also because they were with us. They can't say, ''You can't trust that crowd anymore. They're not good with your money. They won't give you a tax cut. They can't manage the economy. They can't manage crime. They're weak on welfare. They're no good in foreign policy and defense.'' All that stuff is out. We can have a real conversation in 1998.

And what is it about? What is it about? Just what you said: How are we going to prepare this country for the 21st century? What still needs to be done? How are we going to preserve Social Security and Medicare for our generation, the biggest generation, without asking our kids to pay too much to take care of us because we're bigger than our kids are in numbers? How are we going to give a world-class education to every American? How are we going to embrace all this diversity we have and still be bound together as one America? How are we going to stop being the biggest polluter in the world when it comes to carbon dioxide, which is warming the planet with potentially serious consequences to our people and people around the world, and still keep this economy growing so everybody can make a good living? How are we going to provide working families with the tools they need to succeed at home and at work—still the biggest challenge we've got?

I'm glad everybody has got a job, folks, but now—you ask our hosts; they now have a one-year-old daughter—that little child has become their most important work. It dwarfs everything else. Every day—every day—there are people in this country, from hard-working lower middle class people, who are spending 25 percent of their income on child care and still can't afford child care where their children are stimulated, to upper middle class people who feel like they can't hold on to their jobs unless they spend so many hours at work they're not with children when they need to be.

Every day there are people in this country who are making choices between being good parents and good workers. And that's why the Democrats ought to expand family leave

so people can get a little time off from work to go to parent-teacher conference or take their kids to the doctor. That's why the Democrats need to keep working until all the children in working families can be insured with health insurance. That's why we need to keep working until we have uniform standards of excellence and lots of local reform in schools. That's why we need to keep working on these things.

We have done so much, but believe me, maybe it's just because I've just got 3 years and a few months left, but I think all the time about 2010 and 2015 and 2020 and what this country is going to be like when my child is my age. And I'm telling you, the best days of America are still ahead if we keep on doing what we're doing.

That's what this election in '98 is about. Why is it important that you're here? Because the voters—there are a lot of voters out there who are still like you were for a long time. They don't think it matters. They think everybody is just screaming at each other in Washington. And what happens? Usually at the end of these campaigns, the party with the most money wins because the airwaves get full of these 30-second ads which either persuade people who are undecided or turn them off so much they stay home. And the marginal voters that stay home are the working people who would vote for us if they showed up.

That's why this dinner is important. You ask Martin Frost to go through the 20 closest congressional races in the last election, 1996, when the Vice President and I were honored to be returned to office with the electoral votes of the people of Florida. We were honored. We won a nice victory. But you go through those races, and you will see that in the 20 closest races, in the last 10 days, we were out-spent 4 to 1.

So I have to tell you, I am unapologetic about being here. I am proud of you for being willing to help carry on this debate. We can have a discussion, an honest discussion about the future in 1998, but we have to make it possible for Patrick Kennedy and John Baldacci and Martin Frost and Dick Gephardt and Peter Deutsch and all those people we've got running, fabulous people who are not in office, to be heard, because we now are in a position to finish this work of preparing our country to be what our children deserve.

I'm proud of you for being here and very grateful. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:54 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts John W. and Peggy Henry. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks in the Education Session of the Democratic National Committee's Autumn Retreat on Amelia Island, Florida

November 1, 1997

[*The discussion is joined in progress.*]

The President. I'll try to get through this. I think I'll get better as we go along. We'll see.

First of all, I believe that the condition of our children will continue to be one of the major issues for the country for the next 10 to 20 years. And I think we have to admit that with all our economic success, with the fact that we've got 3 million fewer people on welfare and crime is down and the schools are getting better, there are still a lot of kids in this country who don't have the childhood they need and that we need for them to have. And I'd just like to make a few comments on the issues that all of you have raised.

First, I think almost every family, even families in comfortable incomes, feel the tension of their job in the workplace and their job at home. Americans, we know, in general, are working longer than they were 20 years ago. There are more hours spent at work today by the average American family at all income levels than 20 years ago. And I think that means that things like child care and family leave are much more important.

Now, if I might just make a comment, the family leave law has probably touched more people in a profoundly personal way than just about anything else we've done. People still come up to me on the street all over the country and talk about it. And I believe we should go beyond it. I think we ought to expand the law to require that people should