the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades, in both reading and math, which is a big deal because every single year we have more and more of our kids whose first language is not English. So this country is moving in the right direction. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is purer than it was before. We set aside more land, protected it or preserved it, than any administration except those of the two Roosevelts. We've had a hundred—that's big in Colorado—we had over 100,000 young people serve this country through AmeriCorps, our national service program, in communities all over America, earning money to go to college. That happened in 4 years. It took the Peace Corps 20 years to reach 100,000. Ninety percent of our children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time ever. We've had a more active Government, but we now have the smallest Government in terms of employment we've had since 1962, when John Kennedy was President. So we had these ideas; we put them into effect; and they worked. So I hope you will say that to people.

The second thing is I hope you will say you were here because you agree with what we should do now, because we can't just sit on our lead. The question now is, we've spent 6 years trying to get this country to work again, just trying to have it work, knowing that we could work together; that the economy could sustain growth; that we could bring the crime rate down, something a lot of people didn't believe we could do anymore; that we could get rid of the deficit. So what are we going to do now? What are we going to do?

And there are these two competing visions. I'll give you the Republican vision in the argument most favorable to them. If one of them were here, they'd say something like this: ''Look, we agree with the President; we'll take the surplus that's attributable to Social Security taxes, and we won't spend it anymore. And so that can be used to pay down the debt some. But we think we ought to give you the rest of the money because it's your money; it's your tax money; and if we leave it in Washington''—I heard this, I heard them on the floor the other day. I watched them on C–SPAN, and one of their young leaders said, ''If we give them the money, they will spend it on their friends.'' ''Their friends.''

Now, that's their argument. Our argument is, we have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to deal with the long-term challenges of the country. And if we have a tax cut as big as they want, we'll never do it. We've got to deal with the aging of America, the doubling of the number of people over 65 in 30 years. And therefore, we ought to use a lot of this surplus not only to set it aside, but to pay down—to extend the life of Social Security, extend the life of Medicare, provide more preventive screenings for older people so they don't get sick in the first place, and provide for a modest prescription drug benefit, because three-quarters of the seniors in this country don't have it. And if you set aside the surplus and you do it in the right way for both Social Security and Medicare, you can then deal with another big challenge which is the long-term health of the economy, because we could make America debt-free for the first time since 1835 in just 15 years, guaranteeing long-term stability, lower interest rates, higher investment, a stronger economy—debt-free.

If I had told you in 1992, when I was running for President, ''Elect me, and 6½ years later I'll come back, and we'll talk about what to do with the surplus and how to make America debt-free,'' you would have said, ''He's a nice young man, but that's hopeless. The kid, he is clueless. He doesn't have any idea what's going on.'' But it is before us now, and we have to decide what we're going to do.

We also have to realize that if their tax cut passes, it will require huge cuts in education, in the environment, in biomedical research, even in national defense, which they say they support—massive cuts.

And we have a tax cut that's smaller, that helps families to save, to deal with long-term care and child care, primarily. Also helps us to build modern schools and gives people like you incentive to invest in the poorest areas of America by giving you the same tax incentives through tax credits and other mechanisms to invest in Indian reservations, the Mississippi Delta, Appalachia, and the inner city that you have right now if you want to invest in the Caribbean, in Africa, and Latin

America or Asia, which I think is very important.

So they'll say, ''Well, our tax is bigger than your tax cut.'' You ever heard those arguments when you were a kid, you know, the sixth grade? [*Laughter*] ''My daddy drives a bigger car than your daddy does.'' And if that's the argument, we don't do very well. If that's the argument, why are you here? Most of you should be over there with them.

But you know life is fleeting. This is the opportunity of a lifetime. We have never had an opportunity like this, none of us in our political lifetime. And we have these big, looming challenges: how to keep the economy going, how to deal with the aging of America, how to deal with the needs of all of our children for a world-class education. And we've got a way to deal with them now. And we have proved that if we deal with them, the economy will be stronger, and we'll all do better.

So I hope you'll say, ''The second reason I'm there is they're having a big debate in Washington about what to do with this prosperity, and I agree with the Democrats. I think we ought to deal with the long-term challenges of this country.''

And the final thing is, I think the real difference between us is how we define community in America. Some Republicans obviously are very harsh and negative; some are very soothing and nice, and they like to get everybody together. There are all kinds of reasons. I don't like this personal attack business, but the question is, do you believe that each and every person in this country is important to our common success, and do you believe that each and every person in this country should have a right to be treated with dignity? And how do you define that?

Is the American community all those people who say they believe in the same things, or is it all of us who are responsible citizens who are entitled to be treated in a certain way and have a certain set of opportunities? I'll just give you two or three examples where there is almost a complete difference of opinion in the modern parties today, from the left to the right in the Democratic Party and from the left to the right in the Republican Party.

Almost all of us are for the Patients' Bill of Rights. Almost all of them supported killing it in the Congress. Why? The health insurance companies say it will raise your health insurance premiums if your doctor says you need to see a specialist, and they can't stop it; if you get to go to the nearest emergency room; if you get to keep your doctor during the course of treatment even if you change your HMO provider. I think we're right and they're wrong. Even they say it only raises your insurance premiums $2 a month. I think it's worth $2 a month to give people the security of a decent health care system.

But all of them, from top to bottom, were against it, just about. We got a handful of votes.

I believe we ought to control—close the gun show loophole. We did the Brady bill—I remember when we did pass the Brady bill, they said, oh, this was the end of the world. They beat a bunch of our House Members in '94 over the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, and they said, oh, the hunters were going to all lose their weapons. And I remember going back to New Hampshire in '96—now, by the way, 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds have not gotten a handgun because of the Brady bill. And I remember talking to all of these hunters in New Hampshire, saying, ''You beat a Congressman in '94 here because he voted for the Brady bill. And he did that because I asked him to. So if there is a single hunter here that has been inconvenienced in your hunting, I want you to vote against me, too. But if you haven't, they didn't tell you the truth, and you need to get even.'' Our victory margin in New Hampshire went from one to 13.

People knew they were being sold a bill of goods, once they saw it. So now we come along and say, but there are still a lot of criminals buying guns at these gun shows and urban flea markets, and let's do a background check there. And well, you would think it was the most burdensome thing that we had ever come up with. So our crowd said, ''Let's do it,'' and their crowd said, ''Let's don't.''

How do you define community? What does it really mean to say, ''I think it's worth a lot to keep every kid we can keep alive,