AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

have particular States going broke because they have disproportionate burdens of immigrants, of AIDS patients, or anything else. This is another important feature of this.

But finally, let me say two other things. Under this system the American people will have more choice than most Americans do now. If you have a health care plan that's better than the one we're writing into law, your company can keep giving it to you, and the cost of it won't go up as rapidly. But there's a limit for the first time to what can be taken away. If you don't have one, you will get one. And you'll have more choices today. Only one in three workers in a plant with a health insurance plan has any choice in the way they get their health care. Every American worker will be guaranteed at least three different options in the health care plan. And that's a plus for America, to give the consumers of this country more choices.

And finally, I want to say a special word of thanks to the thousands of Americans from all across this country who helped us to put this plan together and especially to the literally hundreds and hundreds of doctors and nurses and others who told us their stories, so that we found, unbelievably, we had doctors who were miserable, nurses who were unhappy, and the people who lost their insurance in the 11th hour when they didn't know what was going to hit them. So for the first time in the history, we are going to have a health care plan that has significant input on the front end from the people who provide the health care because they know, the ones who've been involved in this process, that we cannot go on.

And finally, let me just make this point: At some point in life when you have a problem, whatever it is, you have to ask yourself a pretty simple question, because every change involves taking a chance, you have to ask yourself which is greater: the cost of change or the cost of staying the same? It is clear that the greater cost is to keep on doing what we're doing and letting America go bankrupt and breaking the hearts of millions of American families.

And so I say to you, we've got a lot of work to do to turn the California economy around. But we've taken important steps that were not taken before, and there's more to come. We've got a lot of work to do to work through all the complexities of the health care issue. We've got a lot of work to do to convince Americans to have the courage and to give Americans the security they need to change. But I am telling you, folks, if we do what we ought to do, California and this country will walk into the 21st century with their heads held high, with the American dream still alive for our children, with our diversity a strength, not a weakness, in a nation that is still leading the world, if we have the courage to change and the will to give our people the security they deserve.

That is what I'm dedicated to. And I thank you for being here today to support that. God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:04 p.m. at McClellan Air Force Base.

Remarks in a Town Meeting in Sacramento
October 3, 1993

The President. First of all, let me thank all of you for being here tonight, and also thank all those I can't see yet who are at the other stations, and all the people of California who are watching.

I want to talk about whatever you want to talk about tonight, but just by way of introduction, let me say that when I ran for President, I ran basically because I thought our country was headed in the wrong direction economically, because I thought our people were coming apart instead of coming together as a country, and because I thought our Government wasn't facing up to our problems. And since taking office, I've tried to address those things by changing our economic focus, by trying to bring people together across regional and racial and other lines, and by trying to just take the tough problems of the country, one after the other, starting with the deficit, trying to make some progress on it.

There are a lot of things I hope we get to

talk about, including the California economy tonight, which I spent countless hours on since I've been President. But I want to talk a minute just about the health care issue, because it relates to so much else.

We are in a time of great change. You know that out here. You've benefited from some of these changes in the last 10 years. Now you've suffered for the last 3 years from a lot of those economic changes. In order for America to make change our friend instead of our enemy, we have to have a certain base level of personal security and family security in this country. In order for us to do that, we have to be competitive with other nations, too. And both of those things bring us always back to health care, where we spend more money and have less to show for it and where we're the only advanced country that doesn't provide health security for all our people.

So the thrust of this health care effort is, first of all, to guarantee Americans security—health care that's always there, health care that can never be taken away—and to do it in a way that is fair to the American people and that lowers, not cuts health care costs but lowers the rate at which it is increasing, so that it helps the economy as well as helps the health security of American families. And it is the key to dealing with so many of our other problems and to giving the American people the security they need to face the future. I hope we get to talk more about it.

Thank you.

Russia

Stan Atkinson. Mr. President, while we are here tonight to address the matters of health care, the economy, and other domestic issues, we certainly can't ignore the events talking place today and tonight in Russia. It has been a bloody day there, with anti-Yeltsin forces fighting police and military units in the streets. Well-armed protesters won most of the battles, ramming trucks into government buildings, even launching rocket-propelled grenades. Russian President Yeltsin has issued a state of emergency, and military reinforcements in the form of his crack best troops are en route to Moscow.

Carol Bland. And before we begin tonight, Mr. President, we're wondering whether or not you could update us on the situation in Russia, in particular this Government's response to it.

The President. Well, first of all, let me say what happened is that the opponents of reform, the people who don't want a new constitution, the people that don't want an election, basically in the person of Mr. Rutskoy and Mr. Khasbulatov, their supporters who basically started all this disorder and violence today—President Yeltsin has bent over backwards not to have the soldiers fire on anybody, not to promote any violence. And he may be thinking today he went too far in that, because they basically got up a head of steam, and the situation got out of control.

I believe that he will be successful in the end because the people support him. And I think the United States should support Yeltsin as long as he is the person who embodies a commitment to democracy and to letting the Russian people chart their own course. And he does. The people who have started this opposition are people who represent the old Communist system that Russia is trying so hard to move away from.

So I wish him success. I thank him for not trying to promote any unnecessary violence. And I hope that this will be as peaceful a resolution as possible, but it's going to be pretty tough for them for the next few days.

Mr. Atkinson. Thank you, Mr. President. Now on to our program. In addition to the audience here with you at KCRA in Sacramento, we're also going to hear from a lot of other people all over California, up and down the State, in fact. They're in cities tonight waiting to listen to you. For instance, may I do some introductions? Joining us by satellite from KRON television in San Francisco, reporter and news anchor Pete Wilson, along with a live studio audience. Moving south to Los Angeles, Paul Moyer is there with a group assembled at KNBC television. Welcome to all of you. And also, from southern California, Marty Levine. Marty and our fourth studio audience join us live from KNSD television in San Diego. And from Sacramento and KCRA, I'm Stan Atkinson. Mr. President, my partner, Carol Bland.

Health Care Reform

[*Ms. Bland introduced a participant whose insurance company refused to cover the cost of a bone marrow transplant for her son who had leukemia. She asked if the new health care plan would cover such experimental procedures.*]

The President. The answer to the question

is that in most cases the answer would be yes. And the reason I say most cases is that under our plan people will have coverage as they do in insurance today for certain conditions like leukemia. And when there is evidence that that is the best available treatment and a doctor for the child, in this case, for a child or for an adult wants to pursue that treatment, then the insurer will not take that option away. But there has to be—I don't want to mislead you, there has to be at least a doctor, there has to be some substantial evidence that the treatment might work—you never know if it will in experimental treatment—but that it might work.

So in the case of a bone marrow transplant where there is evidence that it often has been effective, it should cover that. And that's the way we tried to set it up. In other words, to be less restrictive than most insurance policies are today but still leave doctors with their considered medical judgment, some ground not to do things that don't make any sense at all.

Mr. Atkinson. Mr. President, if we can step back just a moment, let me call your attention to our screen, and we're going to see—that's a fellow whose name is Pete Wilson. Now, he's not the Governor Pete Wilson, he's the news anchor Pete Wilson from KRON television in San Francisco.

Pete.

Pete Wilson. Stan, the President and I have been over this a couple of times just in recent weeks, as a matter of fact.

The President. He always gives me that disclaimer. But I talk to Governor Wilson all the time. [*Laughter*]

Public School System

[*Mr. Wilson introduced a participant who asked what the administration plans to do to improve the public school system.*]

The President. Good question. Before I answer that, I want to thank that lady who just asked that question. It must take an awful lot of courage for her to come here within a month of losing her child, and I thank you.

Let's talk about the public schools. I have been working since I first became President to pass a new bill called Goals 2000, which will enable us to change the way we evaluate our schools and will give the schools the incentives and resources they need to perform at a much higher level.

Essentially, what we want to do is to set some national standards, not by Government employees but by educational experts, some national standards that, then, we can measure every school against every year so that parents and other interested people can tell how well the schools are doing. We want to emphasize the things that we know are important for the future, especially science, mathematics, creative thinking skills, the ability to use the language to reason through new problems, and to provide special resources for that.

The Secretary of Education has worked with the Governors of the country and educators all over the country. They're very excited about having the Government, instead of telling educators what kind of specific inputs they have, set some national standards, give the schools more flexibility over how they do it, and go forward.

The second thing we've done is to try to change the way we distribute Federal aid to education, which will be of immense benefit to California. A lot of the poorer school districts, or districts with a lot of poor kids, don't get their fair share of aid. The bill that we have in the legislature now, and the Congress passes, will be a big boon to California.

The third thing we've tried to do is to deal with the problem of the kids who don't go to 4-year colleges or don't graduate from them. Well over half of our students don't graduate from 4-year colleges, but 100 percent of our students need both a high school diploma and at least 2 years of post-high school education. So we're setting up a system now which will integrate the public schools and the 2-year institutions, the community colleges, the vocational institutions, and others, starting in high school, to let people meld work and learning and begin to do that for a lifetime.

And the final thing that we've tried to do that I think is perhaps going to have the most profound effect over the long run is to be able to tell our young people while they're in junior high and high school that they won't have to worry about paying for a college education, because we've reformed the student loan system to lower the interest rates for the loans, to string out the repayment terms, to make college affordable to everyone, and to allow, starting next year 25,000, going up to hundreds of thousands of students to repay their loan through community service at the local level.

So, start with standards instead of inputs. I spent 12 years working on the public schools, and I can tell you, we need national standards, and then we need to focus how we can give resources to the schools to meet those standards instead of telling them how to run every minute of every day in the classroom. Take account of these other things, and I think you'll see some substantial improvements.

I also will tell you that our bill provides for, I think, a better option than the option that's on the ballot out here for choice. We give States incentives to allow more choice of schools within the public school system, and we give incentives for school systems to empower people to set up schools, license them, and run them according to high standards as a part of the public school system, like you could give a group of teachers permission to start their own school, but it would be part of a school system, and it would have to meet, then, the standards of that school system and give the students and their parents the choice to go there. I think that's a better way to go than the initiative that's on the ballot out here.

Mr. Atkinson. Mr. President, we're going to switch southward now to Los Angeles. And at the studios of KNBC, there's Paul Moyer.

Violence in Schools

Paul Moyer. Stan, thank you. We're going to continue on the vein of education and schools, but this is a different aspect of the life in schools, Mr. President. I would like to introduce you to a very, very brave young man. His name is Dion Brown, he's 15 years old, and he has seen and experienced something that hopefully none of us ever will. About 3 weeks ago he was in line at Dorsey High School here in Los Angeles with his brother, simply trying to register for class. And his brother was shot in the stomach, caught in gang cross-fire. His brother was supposed to be here. He's so afraid of retaliation, we couldn't find him. We're not going to show you Dion's face because he, too, is afraid. But Mr. President, he has a question for you. He's a little nervous, so bear with us.

[*Mr. Brown explained how his brother was shot and asked what the President planned to do to prevent violence in schools.*]

The President. Thank you for coming tonight. And thank you for saying that. Let me say, first of all, the story you just heard unfortunately is becoming all too common, and not just in California and not just in big cities. And we ought to start with first things first.

This is the only country, the only advanced country in the world, the only country I know of where we would permit children access to weapons that make them better armed than police forces. So I'll tell you what we ought to do. I've asked the Congress to pass the Brady bill, which would give us a national system, a waiting period to check the backgrounds of people for age, criminal records, and mental health history before we sell weapons.

There are several bills before the Congress which would ban assault weapons, which have no purpose other than to kill. We ought to pass one. We ought to do it this year. States all over the country are looking at ownership laws which make it illegal for minors to have guns unless they're in the presence of their parents, either hunting or on a target range. And we ought to do that in every State. And we ought to look at the laws by which we regulate gun sellers. We've got to get the guns out of the hands of the children. It is imperative.

Now, in addition to that, I do have a part of this education bill that I just spoke to, safe schools initiative, which would give schools the ability to have more security forces. And in the crime bill, which includes the Brady bill, the waiting period, there are funds which would help people all over the country, cities all over the country, hire another 50,000 police officers which would allow hard-strapped cities to deploy these police officers around schools and at the places of greatest need. It makes a 50 percent downpayment on my desire and commitment from the campaign to put another 100,000 police officers on the street over the next 4 years.

Now, let me just say one final thing. I also think—make them safe first. Make the schools safe, get the guns out of the hands of the kids, put more police on the beat. Start there. Then you have to take these young people who haven't had the family supports, the neighborhood supports, the community supports that a lot of us have had, that we've taken for granted, and realize they are the tip end of a generation of change. This has been going on for 30 years, getting worse every year. And we have got to find ways to give these kids a structure, an order, a hope to their lives.

We have 10 closed military bases today around the country where we've got an experi-

mental program going with the National Guard, teaching high school dropouts to go back and go to school and going through boot camp-like exercises. These are kids that didn't commit crimes. And we've been flooded with kids who want it, because they have no structure in their lives.

We also have more boot camps in the crime bill for first-time offenders. You've got to give these kids something to say "yes" to instead of telling them "no" all the time. But first, there has to be a reestablishment of order and safety in the schools and on the streets. And I hope if you care about this—I know I'm going on a little long, but this is a big deal—the Congress should not drag its feet. They have been debating this for 2 years. It is time to pass a crime bill, it is time to pass the Brady bill, it is time to ban assault weapons, get them out of the hands of kids so the police can do their jobs, and put more police on the street.

Mr. Atkinson. President Clinton, we're going to move even farther south. We're into San Diego now. Your audience awaits you at the studios of KNSD.

Immigration

[*Marty Levine introduced a migrant rights activist who asked about blockades to control illegal immigration from Mexico.*]

The President. Well, I think we should have more Border Patrol guards, and I think we should do more to restrict illegal immigration, I certainly do. I think the fact that we have so much illegal immigration and that half of all of the illegal immigrants in America are in California, a State with an unemployment rate 3 percentage points above the national average, is endangering the historic attitude of America that has been proimmigration. I mean, Los Angeles County has people from 150 different racial and ethnic groups alone. Immigrants made this country. But they did it, by and large, by operating within our laws. If we permit our laws to be regularly violated and flagrantly violated and impose those costs on the State that has the biggest economic problems, I think we run the risk of undermining support for immigration, which I think is a very important American value. So yes, I believe we should stiffen our efforts to control the border.

I don't think it undermines the NAFTA negotiations. The President of Mexico has never asked me to do anything illegal or to continue what is a policy that is inconsistent with our law. And as a matter of fact—I hope we get a chance to talk about this later tonight—one of the reasons that I so strongly support this North American Free Trade Agreement is if you have more jobs on both sides of the border and incomes go up in Mexico, that will dramatically reduce the pressure felt by Mexican working people to come here for jobs. Most immigrants, keep in mind, come here illegally not for the social services, most of them come here for the jobs. If they have jobs in Mexico and they pay decent wages, which this agreement will provide for, then they'll be more likely to stay there, and the immigrants who come here will be more likely to be a manageable number and legal in nature.

Health Care Reform

Mr. Atkinson. We have a health care question for you now, President Clinton. And back in KCRA, Carol Bland.

[*Ms. Bland introduced a participant who asked if she would be able to choose her doctor under the new health care plan.*]

The President. Yes.

Q. And will I have easy access to the specialists?

The President. Yes. The answer to your questions are, yes, you'll have freedom of choice; yes, you'll have easy access to specialists. And most Americans will have more choice than they have now. You heard what she said. She's on Medicare, and she's enrolled in PPO. That's a group of doctors who provide health care together so that you can get a general practitioner or a specialist. They work together.

Q. And I can go anyplace I want?

The President. And she can go anywhere she wants with any doctor who is enrolled in the PPO. And if she has an emergency, they can refer her out to a doctor.

I was just talking with a doctor in Las Vegas who helped to organize a PPO with 700 doctors in it. Under our plan, first of all if you're on Medicare, nothing will change. Secondly, every State in the country will have the power to approve every existing HMO or PPO they want to, so that the people that are already enrolled in these kinds of plans and have high consumer satisfaction will basically not see a change in their health care.

However, you should know that for people who are working for a living and who are insured through their place of work, today only one-third of them have any choice at all. Most of them have no choice, they're just told, here's your plan, and here it is. We will propose to give them at least two other choices so that everybody will have three choices. If they choose a more expensive one than their employer has chosen, they might have to pay a little more, but at least they'll have some choice. You won't be affected. And I think what you'll see is more and more doctors putting together these PPO's so the doctors, rather than insurance companies, will be deciding the quality of health care in America.

Q. Thank you.

Mr. Atkinson. President Clinton, we're going back to San Francisco now. KRON, Pete Wilson. Pete.

Gays in the Military

[*Mr. Wilson introduced a lieutenant in the Naval Reserve who asked why the President would not allow the courts to make a decision on gays serving in the military.*]

The President. Well, the courts will decide the issue. And as you know, I don't agree with the policy of the ban, and I attempted to change it. And I did get some change, but not the change that I wanted. And there was a vote in the Senate last week, which I hope you noticed, which showed that only one-third of the Senate basically supported my position. And the reason that we had to have a compromise is we didn't have the votes to get more done.

Part of getting the agreement to stop the investigations, to not automatically throw people out who said they were gay and at least give them a chance to demonstrate that they were complying with the code of military conduct, and not using people's associations against them to investigate them, in other words, creating a big zone of privacy for gays and lesbians in the military service, was the agreement to go forward with the lawsuit. The courts know what the arguments are. The Justice Department can't just drop it because there are too many other cases. In other words, there are other cases at the same level of court, and they've all gone against the service personnel. So they're being appealed up anyway by people who lost them.

And so, it would only change the law, in other words if we changed it. It would only change the law for that circuit, that one Federal district. And if the court of appeals overturned it, it would only change the law for that one court of appeals district, and the act that Congress has enacted would still control it for everybody else. We have no reason to believe that the Supreme Court will uphold the ruling. If it does, of course, then the whole issue will be moot. I think everybody's better off in trying to get a legal resolution of it. And if we just stopped it, it would die right there with that one court. It would be nice for everybody there, but it wouldn't have national impact.

Mr. Atkinson. From Los Angeles again, Paul Moyer has another question.

Health Care Reform

[*Mr. Moyer introduced a couple whose twins were born prematurely and had to stay in the hospital for several weeks. They asked if the new health care plan would cover families who had very high medical expenses.*]

The President. I want to answer your question, but first I want to make sure that all the people that are watching this understand exactly what question he asked. You know, some health insurance policies have very good coverage, but they have a limit to how much you can draw against the coverage. They have a lifetime cap, which, if you get a really serious illness, you could use up in one time. And your lifetime cap's gone, so even though you had a real good policy, you could never use it again. That's the question he was asking.

The answer is under this plan there would be no lifetime caps. You would pay whatever you would be required to pay. If you were self-employed, you'd pay what your premium is. If you were working in a business, you would pay, if you don't have any coverage, up to 20 percent. If you have better coverage than that right now, if your employer pays everything, your employer can continue to pay everything, but there's a limit as to how much can be taken away from you under our plan.

The reason there's no need for a lifetime cap under our plan is that people will be insured in huge pools, community rating pools. You know, this is an expensive thing, but aren't you glad that they got it? They have these two beautiful children now. And so, sure, they put an

extra cost on it, but instead of that cost being, say, 200 or 300 or 400 people insured, there might be 200,000 or 300,000 people insured in the same pool, so that cost spread across a big group won't be that much. And there will be no caps. Our plan abolishes the lifetime caps to keep people from being financially destroyed.

Mr. Atkinson. We're going back to San Diego now. Marty Levine has someone with another question for you.

NAFTA

[*Mr. Levine introduced a small business man who expressed concern that NAFTA would cause unemployment in California.*]

The President. Let me talk just a little about that because it is the big issue. First of all, let me tell you I was the Governor of a State that had plants shut down and jobs moved to Mexico, where people lost their jobs and their livelihoods whom I knew. And I worked very hard on stopping that and even wound up bringing one of those plants back. So I would never knowingly do anything that would put the American people's economic welfare at risk. I believe NAFTA will create jobs, not lose jobs. And I believe that the jobs we'll create will be better paying jobs. And let me explain why.

Most people who worry about NAFTA losing jobs know that there are a lot of plants that American companies own along the Mexican border with the United States in the so-called *maquilladora* area. If an American company puts up a plant down there, they can produce products in Mexico and import them back into the United States duty free. So people think, well, that happened in the 1980's, so if this agreement breaks down barriers, maybe more of that will happen. Actually, less of that will happen. Here's why.

Under the NAFTA agreement, the cost of labor and the cost of environmental investments in Mexico will go up. Under the NAFTA agreement, Mexico agrees to stop requiring so many products sold in Mexico to be made in Mexico. So, for example, we'll go from selling 1,000 American cars to 60,000 American cars in Mexico the first year, according to the auto companies. And also under the NAFTA agreement, Mexican tariff barriers are further lowered and so are Americas. The problem is theirs are 2½ times as much as ours. So as they lower barriers, we'll get a bigger benefit out of it than if we lower barriers.

And finally, let me say this. Five years ago we had a $5.5 billion trade deficit with Mexico. Now we have a $5.7 billion trade surplus. Compare that with an $18 billion trade deficit with China, a $44 billion trade deficit with Japan. We will gain jobs out of this. We will gain incomes out of this. And finally, if we do this with Mexico, then you've got Chile, Argentina, and other countries who want the same deal. We'll make a lot of money out of it over the next 20 years if we do it.

I hope I can help you persuade the people in San Diego to support it. We're also going to get some more money for that terrible environmental problem you've got along the border there in San Diego to try to clean that up. And there will be less environmental problems and more investment of the kind you needed years ago there if we pass this agreement.

Mr. Atkinson. President Clinton, back here at KCRA, a good-looking young fellow has something he wants to ask you.

The President. Boy, he does look good.

Youth Employment Opportunities

[*Ms. Bland introduced a 13-year-old who asked what could be done to prevent youth from selling drugs in order to make money.*]

The President. Give him a hand. [*Applause*] That took a lot of guts.

Let me say, we're working on a couple of things. First of all, this last summer we were able to have a couple hundred thousand more jobs in the country for young people in the summertime. I wanted a much bigger program that I tried to pass in the Congress, but I couldn't. What I think we need to do is two things, one I mentioned earlier. I want to try in every community in the country to bring school and work closer together, so that people can learn while they're working and so that young people who need to work can work and get an educational experience at the same time. In other countries, this is much more frequent, Germany, for example. We're trying to build up those kind of programs in this country. The second thing I want to try to do is to provide opportunities for young people who need it to work part-time, but year round. And we're working on that. I tried, as I said, I tried to pass a bill through the Congress earlier this year to get more summer jobs. I couldn't pass it.

But I think there is a lot of support in the country for the idea that young people who live in economically difficult circumstances, want to work, have the chance to do it. We want to make it easier for the employers to hire them.

So we're working on that, and you've given us a little encouragement to do it.

[*At this point, the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Defense Conversion

Mr. Atkinson. You've had a lively afternoon. That was quite a crowd that greeted you at McClellan, a couple of thousand people. They got you going, didn't they?

The President. They did, and I love seeing them.

Mr. Atkinson. It was a hard time stopping. Just barely made it in time to get on the air here.

The President. Well, they've done so much wonderful work at McClellan. They showed me two of the electric cars that they're working with people in the area to do and some of the environmental work they've done. One of the things we're really trying to do to help California deal with all the military cuts is to emphasize the ability of the defense system, especially these bases, to develop dual-use technologies. And they showed me a lot—that is, things that can be used for defense and domestic purposes. At McClellan, they developed an electric car that goes from zero to 60 in 12 seconds, gets 80 miles per gallon at 55 miles an hour, and has a maximum speed of 100 miles an hour. And now all we've got to do is figure out how to make it economical for people to buy. [*Laughter*] But I think we'll be able to do it.

The Big Three automakers this week announced a pathbreaking research project with all of our Government and defense labs, and we're going to try to triple the mileage on cars by the end of the decade. And the auto companies have made a commitment; they're going to invest money. We're going to invest money. And it means a lot more jobs for Americans if we can do it.

Mr. Atkinson. Pretty slick.

Pete Wilson is standing by with your audience at KRON in San Francisco.

Job Training

[*Mr. Wilson introduced an unemployed California resident who asked about programs to retrain older professionals.*]

The President. You know, you're about the third person in the last 10 days that's asked me that question, and I have to tell you that we have not done anything or thought of what to do exactly that would emphasize only people above a certain age. I will tell you what we have done. Did you work in a high-tech company before?

Q. I did, sir, yes.

The President. What kind of company did you work in?

Q. It was a nuclear weapons, actually.

The President. Yes, I think even you hope we don't have to do that anymore. But let me say what we are—first thing we've got to try to do is create some more jobs in the high-tech area, so let me emphasize that. Just this week we announced, with a lot of people from California there in Washington, that we were removing from any export limitations 70 percent of the computers made in this country, in recognition of the fact that the cold war is over. We still have to worry about proliferation of weapons, but we freed up $30 billion worth of computer exports and $7 billion worth of supercomputers and telecommunications exports. That will create a lot more jobs in California, and a lot of the companies in California have already issued statements saying it will create more jobs. So I hope there will be more jobs for you to take.

Now, let me tell you what we are trying to do which will benefit older people, because very often companies don't themselves retrain them. What we're trying to do is to set up a partnership with the private sector in which we change the present unemployment system to a reemployment system. That is, you're a good example of—now, unfortunately, you're more usual than unusual. It used to be when people lost their jobs, there was a temporary downturn in the economy, and a few months later they get the same job back when their old company got new business, when the economy picked up.

Now, when people lose their jobs, most often because of what we call structural changes in the economy. That is, the jobs are lost to automation, or the demand for the jobs are no longer there, or some other country's kicked us out of the market, or we kick some other country out of the market. So the unemployment system needs to be totally changed to a

reemployment system so that the minute someone is notified that they're going to lose their job, the Government kicks in with training funds, which can be used in partnership with the employer if the employer wants to keep the person and try to train them for something new. Or we show people, here's where the jobs are growing in number, here are your training options, and you start right then. Instead of waiting for their unemployment to run out and then starting it, it should start immediately at the time a person knows they're going to be unemployed and hopefully even before.

When we were in Sunnyvale, California, the other day, not too far from here, they had already started such a system, and it had resulted in a dramatic shortening of the time people were unemployed. And so that is what I think we should do.

It may be that we should give employers some extra incentive to retrain older workers. I'll be honest with you, until people like you started asking me, I had never given it much thought. If you have any specific ideas, I hope you'll write me and give them to me because, believe it or not, I normally get them. Uncle Sam's doing a pretty good job of getting your mail to me.

Mr. Atkinson. We're going back to Los Angeles.

The President. Let me—one last thing. He is really the typical American of the future. The average person will change work seven times in a lifetime now, sometimes for the same employer, sometimes for a different employer. So we simply have to establish a lifetime learning system so that people feel the same obligation to retrain the 55-year-old worker that they do the 25-year-old worker. If we don't do it, we'll never get our economy straightened out, because you can't keep the same kind of work; the nature of work is changing too fast.

[*Mr. Moyer introduced a representative of the Mexican American Grocers Association who requested help to expand the association's training program.*]

The President. Let me tell you what I want to do. Keep in mind, there are people like you all over America who may be doing different things. And the needs of every economy are different. I want to try to do two things. First of all, I think we need more funds for job training given to States, so that the States can direct those funds in the way that they're best needed.

So in the case of California, most of the unemployed people are in the south, although the whole State has problems, but most of the unemployment is in southern California. And the people at the local level are best able to judge what programs are working. So you've got a wildly successful program; if your State had more job training funds, they could direct them to you. And that's part of what we're trying to get done in this whole reemployment system that I just described to you. And we'll be going up to Congress soon with a bill that tries to do that, to get more funds, with fewer strings attached, given to local communities for the programs that work.

The second thing that we need to do is to vigorously attempt to get more private investment into distressed inner-city areas. If you think about it, it is not rational for there not to be more locally owned businesses and more people working in these distressed inner-city areas, because most of the people who live there have jobs, make money, have checks, could spend it there, but there's no investment going into those areas. So we passed a bill earlier this year, which we're in the process of implementing, that will give big incentives for people to invest private dollars to create more jobs so that your training programs will be able to find work for people after they're trained. Those are the two things we're trying to do.

But when you see this training bill come up before the Congress in the next several weeks, I think you'll like it because it will not only provide more money but it will be with fewer strings attached, so the communities can direct it to people like you who are making things happen.

It's real impressive, 400 jobs, isn't it? It's good.

Mr. Atkinson. We're back to San Diego again.

Violence and Drugs

[*Mr. Levine introduced a church-based community organizer who asked about administration plans to combat violence and crime.*]

The President. Let me tell you, first of all, I'd like for you to have a chance to say maybe to me and to all these people what you think ought to be done. But let me begin by responding to your specific question. He is coming to see—Dr. Brown is, Lee Brown, who is the Di-

rector of Drug Policy for our country, the drug czar. He was formerly the police chief in New York, in Atlanta, and in Houston. He started a community policing program in New York. And believe it or not, New York City now, for 2 years in a row, according to the FBI statistics has had a decline in their crime rate in all seven major areas of crime.

So the first thing we've got to try to do is to make the police and the community work together better, with the proper allocation of resources with a view toward preventing crime from occurring as well as catching criminals quicker. That's why we need more police officers so cities can afford to deploy the resources that way. The second thing we've got to do, I'll say again, is to try to take the guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. The third thing we're trying to do, as Dr. Brown will tell you, is we want to change the emphasis of the Federal Government's drug control efforts. And with regard to enforcement, we want to concentrate more on kingpins, really big dealers, to try to break the financial back of a lot of these networks, not just on how many arrests we can make of people in the middle but really go after big people and money networks.

Then, with people who are actual users and who may commit crimes in the course of that, we're trying to have much more comprehensive alcohol and drug abuse treatment. One of the really important things about our health care plan that I would think you would support is that it includes substance abuse treatment for people who now don't have any insurance. So that will stop a lot of these long, long delays for adequate treatment. Drug treatment works in an extraordinary percentage of the cases, not in all the cases but in a lot of the cases, if it is there.

So those are that things that we're working on. But the other thing we want to do is to listen to people like you who have actually done things that work. We have not only Lee Brown. Janet Reno, the Attorney General, was a prosecutor in Miami, one of the toughest towns in America for drug problems. And Louis Freeh, the Director of the FBI, was a U.S. attorney, a Federal judge, and an FBI agent, working principally in drug cases. He broke big international drug cases as well as dealing with drugs on the street. So we've got these three crimefighters who basically came up from the grassroots. And it's the first time we ever had a team of grassroots crimefighters dealing with the drug issue. They want to hear from you and people like you all over the country about what would work for you.

Mr. Atkinson. Mr. President, while we have you and since you've asked, Mr. Hay does have a couple of suggestions.

The President. I want to know.

[*The participant said that education and drug treatment programs were more effective than increasing law enforcement.*]

The President. Let me say just, if you think what he said, plus what the young man said here who wanted the job for his friends, plus what the young man said whose brother got shot in school—it goes back to the bigger point: The problems you see that you're all horrified about today have been festering and developing over a generation in America.

There were poor communities in this country 30, 40, 50 years ago that had no difference in the crime rate, no difference in the drug abuse rate as the communities today. But they had locally owned businesses, coherent community organizations, and intact families, all of which you have going away today.

So if you want to do something fundamental, we have to give these kids people like him to relate to—like you, sir—people who can be almost the kind of role models you used to take it for granted that the parents would be, who can create their own kind of gang in a community organization. We all want to be in a gang, don't we? I mean, your church is a gang. Your basketball team is a gang. In other words, we have a need to be with people who are like us, who share our values, who make us feel important, who reinforce us. And there is no simple answer to this, but you've got to start with these children when they're very young, and you have to give them a way of belonging and a way of learning and a way of growing that is positive.

Let me say, I agree with you about the jails. You can build more jails and not make society safer. And we need to distinguish between people who need to be kept out of society for a very long time and others that we may be jailing we could do something else with.

There's a difference in police. More police won't necessarily make you safer, but if they relate well to the community, if their neighbors trust them, if they like them, if they're on the

street, they can lower the crime rate by keeping crime from occurring, by deterring the thing from occurring. If you have the right kind of relationships, they can be an enormous weapon.

But I want you to talk to Dr. Brown. And you're absolutely right, and I thank you for giving your life to this. There is not any more important work in America today than what you are trying to do.

Health Care Reform

Mr. Atkinson. I think we're going to switch gears. This is a Sacramento physician.

Ms. Bland. Exactly. He's our first doctor of the evening, as a matter of fact——

The President. Good for you.

[*Ms. Bland introduced a doctor who asked if the new health care plan would enable struggling physicians groups to provide the best care for their patients and if independent doctors would receive assistance.*]

The President. Yes. First of all, let me say that there are things in this plan which will give much better access to data of all kinds to physicians, both business management data, health outcomes data, a whole lot of things you don't get now, particularly if you're in individual practice, and to help people to set up and operate things without losing money, without making business mistakes.

Also the plan would significantly simplify a lot of the money management and paper management problems you have today. For example, a community this size, I would imagine the average multidoctor practice would be just like a hospital, you have to deal with maybe 300 different insurance companies. And we're trying to simplify that. That will reduce the possibility of error.

Secondly, keep in mind, every person under our proposal who's not covered now would be offered the option of three different kinds of coverage, and one of which would be to keep choosing individual doctors on an individual basis. That, in the beginning, would be more expensive for the employee. But at least they'd have the choice. Today only one-third of the workers who are insured at work have multiple choices in their health plan. And what we think will happen, sir, is that a lot of independent doctors will be able to organize, but not in a HMO type thing, maybe even in a PPO thing, but at least to all say, we will serve our patients as they need it, but we'll be able to save a lot of money doing it because the administrative costs will be lower.

Let me say, in an attempt to satisfy just your concern, we did involve hundreds of doctors in this, including people that we trusted. I asked my own doctors to help us, just from their point of view of their own practice. I figure they'd tell me the truth. They don't mind disagreeing with me or telling me I'm crazy or telling me I need to lose 10 pounds or whatever they say. [*Laughter*] So we used a lot of doctors in different specialties and family doctors, GP's, too. And we also have asked Dr. Koop, who was the Surgeon General, as you remember, a few years ago under President Reagan and did a marvelous job, to sort of be our moderator, if you will, with the physician community all over America, to try to get as much feedback as we can, so as we move forward with this plan in Congress, we address concerns just like yours and we make sure that the doctors feel very good about this when it's over.

Let me just say, as you pointed out, the independent practice is becoming rarer and rarer anyway because of the economic pressures. One of the reasons for that and one of the reasons a lot of doctors have urged us to do something, is that in 1980—just listen to this, you want to know what they're up against—in 1980, the average doctor took home about 75 percent of the money that came into a clinic. By 1992, that figure had dropped from 75 percent to 52 percent because of increased bureaucracy and paperwork and all the people they had to hire to keep up with all the things that are ballooning the cost of this system. So we're trying to simplify that and leave you the option to stay in independent practice and leave your patients the options to be covered by you.

Now, keep in mind, most of the patients you have today probably have their own health insurance. Those that are in plans now that do that, we're not going to change that. What we're trying to do is to help those who don't have coverage get some coverage. But they would also be able to choose you in either a physician group or as an independent practitioner. Another thing that they can do is to enter a PPO, and you stay out of the PPO, but when they need to see you, they see you. And then the only thing they have to pay is the difference between the reimbursement schedule in the PPO and what you would charge, which in your

line of work would probably not be dramatically different.

So there are going to be all kinds of options. It should lead to a bigger patient pool, not a smaller one, and it shouldn't radically force you to change your practice, but it would give you the opportunity to do it. And if you do it, you will get the information you need to avoid losing money, and you'll have a simpler system to deal with.

Mr. Atkinson. Four out of every five people in the Sacramento metro area are in a managed health care system. We understand that Sacramento was used as something of a model for you and the First Lady. Is that true?

The President. It was. We looked at the Sacramento area because of the high percentage of people in some sort of managed care and the relatively high level of satisfaction among consumers with it. And we looked at the California public employees system because they've done such a good job of not lowering their rates but lowering the rate of increase.

We also looked at a number of other things. The Mayo Clinic system, for example, most of the people would concede that the Mayo Clinic has pretty high quality health care. Their inflation in cost this year was 3.9 percent, about a third of what the medical inflation rate was nationwide.

So there are ways to lower cost without sacrificing quality. To be fair, though, there are a lot of other things. Doctors do need a lot of information that they don't have now to deal with the system they've got. And if you give it to them and we provide it, that will also enable them to do a better job.

[*At this point, the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Abortion

[*Mr. Wilson introduced a participant who asked if the President had changed his position on abortion.*]

The President. The answer to your question is no, it hasn't changed. And in fact, if you've been following any of my rallies, all the people that protested against me in the campaign are still protesting against me. So they don't think I've changed my position.

But let me say this. When I took office I abolished the gag rule. I abolished the ban on fetal tissue research. I appointed Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the Supreme Court, who has made a career of fighting for the rights of women and believes in the constitutional right to choose. I have gotten the United States back into the effort to control worldwide population growth, which is an important human issue, not through abortion but through basic contraceptives, something that the United States had walked away from before. So I think that my record on that is clear and unblemished.

The issue that you raise is this: Federal district court judges are appointed by the President but recommended to the President by Senators, if they are Senators of the President's own party, in the States. I didn't know anything about the issue you raised until I also read it in the press. Apparently some of the Senators, two of them, I think, recommended judges to me to be appointed who have questionable positions on that issue. But they are lower court judges; they have to follow the law. So before I appoint them I will have to be satisfied that they intend to faithfully carry out the law of the United States as it now exists, or I won't do it if I think they're going to do that. So you don't have to worry about that. But I don't think I should have the same standard, if you will, or have just sort of a litmus test for every judge on every last detailed issue that might come before the court under the abortion area. I mean, there are a thousand different questions.

I think that if this is a good judge, I ought to consider appointing the judge. But I wouldn't appoint someone that I thought would just flagrantly walk away from what is clearly the law of the land, which is that a woman, within the first two trimesters of pregnancy anyway, has a constitutional right to choose. That's what the law is. That's what I believe in. I don't think it should be changed. And the judges that I appoint will have to be willing to uphold the law of the land if they want the job.

Mr. Atkinson. We're going to go back to Los Angeles, to our sister station, KNBC, and Paul Moyer.

Immigration and Border Control

[*Mr. Moyer introduced a representative of the Asian Legal Center who asked about reorganization of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.*]

The President. Well, let me say this, the Vice President, in his reinventing Government report,

had recommended that we look at whether the border functions of Customs and the border functions of Immigration should be integrated. That was the issue. And that is something, I think, that is worth debating. We've had some instances in which—we got reports when we began to look in how the Federal Government operated, that the Immigration people and the Customs people were actually not only not cooperating but almost getting in each other's way at some border crossings in the United States.

So that's all we looked at. We would not diminish the other part of Immigration's control—function, excuse me—or defund it or underfund it or any of the things that you might be concerned about. And in fact, no decision has been made yet about the organizational issues. It's just that we have been concerned, given the kind of immigration problems we have when we want to reduce the chance that, for example, terrorists could get into this country, we want to deal with some of the problems we had where people were almost sold into bondage to come to this country. And we don't want any kind of unnecessary overlap or conflict between Customs and Immigration. So that's what we're trying to work out, not to diminish the other functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which are very important.

Mr. Atkinson. Mr. President, I hope I'm not breaking the rules here, but a quick followup to that. You know that the Border Patrol says they don't have enough people.

The President. They don't.

Mr. Atkinson. They say that their equipment is falling apart. Senator Dianne Feinstein's proposed what she calls, I believe, a crossing fee of about a dollar a car to raise $400 million for more agents and better equipment. Your INS nominee testified last week that she is not philosophically opposed to that. Can we assume then that that's the administration's stand on that issue?

The President. Well, let me give you two answers. First of all, I have not endorsed the Feinstein proposal, but I am not philosophically opposed to it either. It's just we've got to think through what it means and what others might do for our crossing and whether it has any implications that we don't understand.

The main point is that Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer and others in the California delegation want us to hire 600 more Border Patrol agents, and want us to update and modernize their equipment, and they're right about that. We've got a bill in the Congress which will go a long way towards doing that, and I hope we can pass it and pass it soon. There are simply not enough Border Patrol agents, and the equipment that they've got is simply inadequate. And we must do better.

In terms of the fee, I wouldn't rule it out, but I just hate to embrace something before I understand all of the implications of it. But I agree with the INS Commissioner, Doris Meissner. Neither one of us are philosophically opposed to it, we just have to know what the implications of it are before we can embrace it.

But the bottom line is, what the California Senators want is results. They want more Border Patrol agents, they want modern equipment, they want them to be able to do their job, and they're right. And we're going to do our best to see that they can.

Mr. Atkinson. Appropriately enough, we're going to switch closer to the border now, to San Diego and to KNSD.

Health Care Reform and Privacy

[*Mr. Levine introduced the regional director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, who expressed concern that the proposed national health security card would infringe on an individual's privacy.*]

The President. Well, it'll work just like a Social Security card does. It'll look something like this. This is our little mock-up that I held up on television. And you would have this, which would entitle you to health care wherever you got sick and whatever happened to you. And we have to have some sort of card like this so people can be identified. And so if, for example, if there is an emergency, their health information can be secured quickly if they're in an approved health facility or dealing with a doctor. But it will have the same sorts of protections that a Social Security card would, for example.

And if you'll remember, there was an attempt a couple of years ago to try to broaden the use of Social Security identification which was repelled, because the American people were worried about their Social Security card being used for anything other than to validate the fact that they were entitled to Social Security. So this is purely for the purposes of establishing that you belong to the health care system, that

you are duly enrolled, you're properly a member, and it would function in much the same way as a Medicare card or a Social Security card.

If you have any specific suggestions, I'd be glad to have them. But I can tell you no one has ever anticipated that this would be used to sort of plunder the privacy rights of Americans, but to just increase their personal security.

Q. The concern that, as expressed, has to do with the type of information that might be magnetically made available as part of the information that that card contains and who will have access to the information that that magnetic strip would contain with regard to the individual's background.

The President. But the individual will have—the only thing you have to do is—so that the person is eligible, the person will be enrolled in a health alliance, and the alliance will know whether the person is eligible because he or she is self-employed, small business employee, a big business employee, or somebody on Medicaid. And then there will have to be some access to health data for the appropriate health professionals. But I don't think that there's going to be a lot of information just floating out there.

In fact, people will not have access to information that they don't need or that they don't have a right to know. I mean, you can't just go in and plunder somebody's files. I think the protections for the people will be quite adequate, just as they are today again with Social Security and with Medicare.

Let me just say this. If you have a list of specific questions, if you will get them to me, I will get you a list of very specific answers. Because I realize that, on this question like that, the devil is always in the details. So I know that I haven't fully satisfied you, so you send me the specific questions, and I'll send you the specific answers. And then you can decide whether you agree or not.

Mr. Atkinson. Be assured that she will. We only have 15 minutes left. It's amazing. Time has gone very quickly. We're back in Sacramento, and Carol has a guest.

Teacher Shortage

[*Ms. Bland introduced a participant who asked about efforts to deal with the shortage of teachers.*]

The President. Yes. Two things I might mention. One is that you've probably noticed recently that the Congress passed and I signed the national service bill, which will, within 3 years, enable us to offer 100,000 young Americans a year the opportunity to serve their communities and either earn credit toward a college degree or, if they are teachers coming out of college, to go into teaching and teach off a significant portion of their college costs, so that the National Service Corps will have a teacher corps component.

We work with a program called Teach For America that you're probably familiar with. And a young woman named Wendy Kopp organized it to try to make sure we integrated that into the National Service Corps proposal. So young people in college today, for example, could take out loans under the National Service Corps concept and say, I'm going to be a teacher, in certain areas where there's a shortage of teachers, for a couple of years, and they can wipe off a big portion of their loans.

In addition to that, we're making a real effort to try to encourage a lot of these wonderful people who are coming out of the military, as we downsize the military, to go into teaching, to try to encourage them to do it. And we need, I might say, more cooperation from a lot of the States in passing easier ways for them to become certified to go into the classroom. But if you think about it, the military has had a stunning amount of success in educating and training people on a continuing basis. If you go back to what the gentleman said, he was an older high-tech worker that lost his job, and that's the kind of thing that we need in a lot of our schools today.

So a lot of these military people are being encouraged to go into teaching and being given, through a special program passed by Congress, some incentives to do that. And I hope we can expand that program, because I'd really like to see it. A lot of those folks are still young, they've got the best years of their lives ahead of them, and they could make a major contribution to the classroom. And a lot of them come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and from all different races and ethnic makeups. So they can make a major contribution to what we need to do in our schools and our cities. Thank you.

Let me just say this, you didn't ask that, but since we've got a lot of doctors here, there is also the National Health Service Corps, which helped a lot of doctors to get through med

school but has been shrunk in the last 10 years, will be dramatically expanded if the health care program passes. So you have a lot of doctors in urban and rural underserved areas, too, with the same plan.

Mr. Atkinson. Okay, we're going to switch back to KRON in San Francisco. Pete.

Gun Control

[*Mr. Wilson introduced a participant whose brother had been murdered, and he asked what could be done to deter violent criminals who apparently do not fear punishment.*]

The President. Well, a lot of the younger ones, unfortunately, aren't afraid of anything because they have no sense of the future. They're not invested in their own lives. They're not invested in what they might be doing 2 or 3 or 5 years from now. We're raising a generation of young people for whom the future is what happens 30 minutes from now or what happens tomorrow. And that's a terrible problem.

Now, I believe we should have stronger gun control measures than the Brady bill. For example, let me say again what I think we should do. I think we should pass one of a number of good bills that are in the Congress which would ban assault weapons. There are a lot of them out there for the sole purpose of killing people, and they should be banned, either at the national level or in every State. We should follow the lead of the 17 States which have now made it illegal for young people to possess handguns, unless they are, I'll say again, with their parents, hunting or at some target range, some approved place. We should have much stiffer penalties against possessing these weapons illegally. Then every community in the country could then start doing major weapon sweeps and then destroying the weapons, not selling them.

Another thing you ought to look into in your area: If the murder weapon is ever recovered, which it may not be, it would be interesting to know where it comes from and what tracking is on it. Because one of the things that I learned when I got into this is that every State of any size has hundreds of gun dealers that may be licensed only by the Federal Government for a $10 fee a year. And there are cities and States which may have other laws, but you can still be a gun dealer if you've got this little piddly Federal permit.

So another thing that ought to be done is that the price of getting into the business ought to be raised, and people ought to have to comply with the local laws and not just the Federal permitting laws. All these things would help us to deal with the sheer volume of weapons that are out there in the hands of people that are totally disconnected from our society, while we try to deal with these deeper problems that we talked about earlier.

I feel terrible about what happened to you. We have to face the fact that this is the only advanced country in the world where anybody who wants to can get any kind of gun they want to, to do anything that they want to with it. It's crazy. It doesn't happen in other countries, and we better make up our minds to change it if we want to save more lives and not have to see more people like this person on television 5 years from now. Thank you, sir.

Social Security

[*Mr. Moyer introduced a senior citizen who asked why the Social Security earnings limit had not been eliminated.*]

The President. Because I haven't been able to pass it yet. Specifically, what I promised to do was to raise it and not to totally eliminate it. I think that—do you know what she's talking about? Do you all know what she's talking—once you start drawing Social Security, you can only earn so much money before they start to lower your Social Security check, even if you're totally vested and you're entitled to the whole thing. And a lot of older people are finding it necessary to go back to work today, or they want to go back to work. I mean, people are standing vigorous for much longer periods of time.

And in the campaign for President, I said that I thought the earnings limit was way too low and should be substantially raised, and I do. And I don't even think it would cost a lot of money because the people who earn money pay taxes on the money they earn. And also with the population not growing as fast now, we need those older workers. And so, what I believe we should do is to raise the earning limit. We are negotiating now; we're talking about how much it can be raised, what we can pass through Congress, and what the costs will be.

One of the things that we've done is, in get-

ting serious about the deficit, is to have to make sure before we pass anything, we have to know as precisely as we can exactly what the costs will be. I personally believe, as I told you and I said during the campaign, that it wouldn't cost much, if anything, to raise the earnings limit because the people who go to work will earn more money and pay more taxes.

But I still strongly support it. I think it should be raised, and I think it will be raised. It's just a question of how much and how quick I can get it passed in Congress. I am still committed to it, and I would like to urge you and anybody else watching this program who is in your situation to urge the Members of Congress from this State to vote to do that.

This is one of those issues that there aren't a lot of people against; it's just hard to raise it on the radar screen of the Congress. And to be fair to them—it's easy to bash Congress—they're working 40 percent more this year than last year. I'm proud of that, 40 percent more. I've put all this stuff there, and they're working hard now because of all the things we've put before them. But this has not been addressed, and you're right to bring it up. I haven't forgotten it, but I need your help in building the kind of public support we need to change it.

Mr. Atkinson. Mr. President, unfortunately we have to give way, I think, for a dolphin and "SeaQuest" here in a moment, but we wanted to save a little time for you. I think you have about a minute.

The President. Well, I wish I could take another question or two. Let me first of all thank all of you for coming. And thank you for your interest. Thank you for the very good questions you asked; I wish we could have done more. And let me urge you to keep up this level of involvement. We can get these changes made if the American people demand them. And you don't have to agree with every detail of my health care program, just demand that we pass one that has security and savings and simplicity, that preserves the kind of choice and quality these doctors talked about tonight, and that asks all of us to be more responsible.

We can do this and we can also turn the California economy around if we'll take it one day at a time, one project at a time, and keep at these things until they're done. We can do it. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The town meeting began at 6:33 p.m. at the KCRA television studio.

Remarks to the AFL–CIO Convention in San Francisco, California
October 4, 1993

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