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When we wanted to cut money out of our efforts on housing, we got rid of all the regional HUD offices and consolidated these old bureaucratic programs. We didn't try to cut a program for homeless veterans. There's a right way and a wrong way to do this.

And here, with all this fine music that's been provided to us by the band and the choir from—what? From Florida A&M and Florida State, right? The last thing we need to do is to cut the college loan program and make it more expensive to go to college.

So I say to you, you stay with us. You engage in this great debate. Yes, we'll bring the size of the Government down. Yes, we'll reduce the burden of regulation. But let's remember, we've got to keep our people first. We've got to keep our eye on the future. We've got to invest in education. We've got to grow the economy. We've got to keep the American dream alive.

I want every young person, every young person here tonight, to be able to look to a future where you can do anything that your dreams and your efforts will permit you to do. I want every one of you young people to look forward with the same anticipation that all of us up here had in having your own children and raising your own families. I want you to believe in the promise of America. Let us commit to that and make sure it's real and alive here in Florida.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. at Tallahassee Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles and Lt. Gov. Buddy McKay of Florida; Rudy Malloy, Leon County commissioner; and Mayor Scott Maddox of Tallahassee.

Remarks to the Florida State Legislature in Tallahassee
March 30, 1995

Thank you very much. [*Applause*] I may stay all day, but not here behind the podium. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Speaker, thank you, and Mr. President, thank you. Mr. Speaker Pro Tem, Governor Chiles, Lieutenant Governor McKay, distinguished State officials and members of the Cabinet, members of the Supreme Court, members of the Florida Legislature, ladies and gentlemen: I am very pleased to be here. I've had a wonderful, brief stay in Tallahassee already—ran around Lake Ella this morning and the local park and met a lot of your fellow citizens and enjoyed that very much.

I have enjoyed nothing so much in a long time as listening to Elizbet Martinez play the national anthem. I was watching on the Speaker's closed-circuit television. It was very moving. I was moved by the letters I received from friends and supporters of hers when she was playing the national anthem in Guantanamo, and I just told her that, under the program which the Attorney General has supervised so ably, all the children from Guantanamo should be resettled in the very near future. And we thank you, young lady, for what you have done.

Elizbet gave me a beautiful little angel, and I told her I was going to put it on my table in the Oval Office and I wanted her to come see it. I think she ought to play that in the White House, and I hope she will.

I'm delighted to be here, along with Attorney General Reno and EPA Administrator Carol Browner, here in the Florida Legislature on the 150th anniversary of your statehood. This is the first State legislature I've had the privilege of addressing since I have actually been in office. And as a former Governor and as a Governor who had the privilege of being Governor during the 150th anniversary of our State's statehood, I am especially happy to be here today.

When I ran for President, I was determined to make a new partnership with the States and to be a good partner. We have worked hard on those things with Florida. And goodness knows we've had lots of opportunities, some of them positive and some of them just the problems that life brings. We've worked hard to turn FEMA around and to help you with the last of the hurricane relief, which occurred, of course, before I was elected, but a lot of the work remained to be done when I took office.

And we worked hard in the aftermath of the recent flooding. And I was pleased when I arrived at the Tallahassee Airport last night: Three different people told me they thought FEMA had done a good job handling the floods, which made me feel very good about that.

Attorney General Reno and the INS have worked hard to improve immigration laws, and the Customs Service has worked hard at the Port of Miami to clear the ships faster and step up our antidrug efforts at the same time. We've gone for more public-private partnerships, like the National Magnetic Lab here in Florida, and Carol Browner has worked very hard with many of you here in this room and people throughout the State on a responsible plan to save the Everglades.

The Summit of the Americas was hosted in Florida, and it was a triumph, and we are still feeling the vibrations of it throughout the hemisphere. And I thank all of you who had something to do with that.

Many of you worked hard with us to help to save the space station project. And I think now we have firmly anchored it as a part of America's future. And it's very important, and I can tell you that—I see Bill Nelson nodding his head—he's ready to go. [*Laughter*] I cannot tell you what an important part of our foreign policy it has become. It's given us a way of cooperating with the Russians in ways that cut through political differences and other problems and involve all of our other partners in the space station.

And of course, yesterday I had the privilege of announcing that the Department of Defense had selected Florida as the new headquarters for our Southern Command when it moves out of Panama to the State of Florida. [*Applause*] Thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you.

One thing I tried hard on that I wasn't so successful on to be a good partner with you was to get baseball started up again in time for a full spring training. But I can say that, as you know, there's a case in the courts now, and if the judge does uphold the injunction and the players do manifest their willingness to return to work as they have said they will, then I certainly hope there will not be a lockout. I hope we can have baseball this year, and I think all of you hope that as well.

Let me say to you that the experience that I had as a Governor in the seventies, the eighties, and the nineties—I served for 12 years in all three decades—directly affected the decision I made to seek the Presidency and to do the things I have tried to do. I ran for President largely because I thought our country at the dawn of this new century was facing a whole set of challenges which did not fall easily into the political patterns into which Washington seemed to be frozen, the constant partisan battles, the constant attempt to divide every issue between whether it was liberal or conservative or left or right instead of determining whether it would move our country forward.

Most of the Southern States, and Florida most especially, did pretty well in the 1980's by following a different sort of southern strategy: focusing on educating all of our children and more and more of our adults, focusing on getting more jobs and economic opportunity into our States, focusing on getting people together across racial and other lines, and focusing on real partnerships between the public and private sector. That's what works in real life. It seemed to be a very small part of the political life of our Nation's Capital. And I ran because I wanted to change that. I wanted to try to break out of all the false choices that cloud the rhetoric we hear for years and years and years out of Washington, to try to move this country forward.

I really believe the great question facing our country on the eve of a new century, which will be characterized by breathtaking change brought on by the information revolution, the globalization of the economy in all of its manifestations, the end of cold war, and therefore the end of the need for people to sort of hunker down behind their barriers into two world camps, the great question is whether we can seize the opportunities this new time presents us without being undone by the problems that we confront; whether we can literally preserve the American idea that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can live up to your God-given abilities, that you can provide for your children and know they'll have a limitless future, that you can rely on your country being the strongest force in the world for peace and freedom and democracy in ways that help you at home. That is the great question.

And the answer to the question, indeed, the many answers to the question, in my judgment, do not fall easily within the sharp ideological partisan battles that have dominated our Nation's Capital for too long. Governors and legis-

lators tend to be more practical people. Not that we don't have passion, not that we don't have principles, not that we don't have convictions but we know what works in the end is people working together, not finding ways to drive us apart.

And so I ask you today to spend a few minutes with me thinking about where we are, what we're going to do, what you expect your National Government to do, and how you expect it to relate to you as a citizen, as well as a member of the State government of Florida.

I believe that the role of the National Government in 1995 should be not to be a savior, not to be a Government-knows-best, a one-size-fits-all Government. Nobody believes that anymore. But I also don't believe in the new rage that Government is the source of all of our problems, and if we didn't have it, we wouldn't have any problems. That is contradicted by the experience of every country in the world today and every country the world has known since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

I believe the role of Government is to do the following things: Number one, to create opportunity with a minimum of bureaucracy; number two, to empower people to make the most of their own lives, not to solve their problems for them but to give them the tools to take care of themselves; number three, to enhance our security not just abroad but at home on our streets and in our schools, in our families, as well; and number four, to wage a relentless assault to change the Government that was appropriate for the industrial age but is too bureaucratic, too big, and too cumbersome for the information age and the 21st century.

Now, we've worked hard on that for 2 years. We had an economic strategy to create opportunity, reduce the deficit, and we did, by $600 billion. Indeed, the Government budget today, for the first time in 30 years, is actually in surplus in its operating costs; that is, except for interest on the debt, we have a surplus today, except for interest on the debt.

Now, of course, the bad news is that 28 percent of personal income tax receipts are required to pay the interest on the debt accumulated between 1981 and 1993. So that doesn't mean we can stop working on it. We have to do more, but we have done a very great deal, indeed.

We have expanded trade in ways that have clearly benefited Florida: NAFTA, GATT, the Summit of the Americas, reaching out to the Asian-Pacific region. We have increased our investment in infrastructure and technology. And we have done right well. We have sought to empower people from everything from expanding Head Start to providing more help to States to help them with people who don't go to college but do need some training after high school and apprenticeship programs, to providing more affordable college loans to millions and millions of students in every State in this country.

We have sought to enhance our security by doing a better job of protecting our borders, by fighting against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, by reaching agreements with the Russians and other states of the former Soviet Union to dismantle nuclear weapons. And for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there are no nuclear missiles pointed at the children of the United States today. That is a good thing.

But we have also sought to enhance our security through the crime bill's attempt to put 100,000 more police on our streets through the safe and drug-free schools act, through the Family and Medical Leave Act, through giving tax relief to low-income working families so no one who works full-time with children in the home will still live in poverty. Those things relate to our security, as well.

And finally, we have sought to change the Government, to make it smaller, less bureaucratic, less of a problem, and more of a partner in the American adventure. The Government is now over 100,000 people smaller than it was when I became President. We are on our way to reducing it by 270,000 over 6 years. If no new actions are taken, that will give us the smallest Federal Establishment since John Kennedy was President.

We are cutting programs. We have already eliminated or reduced 300 programs. And in my new budget, I've asked Congress to eliminate or consolidate 400 more. We are deregulating important segments of our economy and trying to reduce the burden of regulation. I'll say more about that in a moment. And we are committed to giving more responsibility to the States, in very important ways that we've also been a good partner with Florida that I didn't mention earlier—the waiver you got from restrictive Federal rules to pursue health care reform, which has enabled small businesses in Florida that could not afford health insurance

before finally to voluntarily insure their own employees.

And I'll say a little about this in a moment, but Florida was also one of now 25 States to receive a waiver from the cumbersome Federal rules governing the welfare system to try to help you move people from welfare to work. We've given more of these waivers in 2 years than the previous administrations, combined, in 12. I believe in shifting power back to the States to make their decisions to build the future of the people of the States, where you can do a better job.

Now, the preliminary results are hopeful. In the last 2 years, we've had sustained economic growth, over 6 million new jobs, a big drop in the unemployment rate, about a 3 percent drop in the unemployment rate here in Florida; the job growth rate here in the private sector about 4 times what it was in the previous 4 years. We are moving forward as a country. We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment/inflation in 25 years. That is the good news. But there are still many challenges, challenges that you confront every day, challenges in economics, challenges in the fabric of our social life, challenges in the way Government works.

We know, still, that in spite of this big recovery, most wage earners are working harder for the same or lower wages than they were making 10 or 15 years ago. We know that within the great American middle class the great challenge of our time is that we have more inequality, people splitting apart by income, mostly related to their own educational levels, something that we never faced before. From the end of World War II until the end of the 1970's, this country rose together. Almost every income group rose about 100 percent, just about double their income. The bottom 20 percent actually increased their income from the end of World War II until 1978 by about 140 percent. We were going up, and we were going together.

Now, since 1979, we have the bottom 60 percent of our country actually losing ground economically in real terms, the next 20 percent having a modest 5 percent gain, and only those of us in the upper 20 percent of the income brackets actually doing quite well. This is something you see in a lot of other countries, but it presents a special threat to the American idea that anybody, anybody who will work hard and play by the rules can live up to the fullest of their ability. And it is a challenge we must face together. It is a new challenge. It has no simple partisan ideological solution.

We know, still, we have too many social problems. We are divided with too much crime and violence and drug abuse, too many of our children born out of wedlock, still too many things that are taking apart the fabric of our society. And we know that for all the changes we've made in Government, we sure have a long way to go there.

I know that Governor Chiles sent all of you a copy of the book "The Death of Common Sense." What you may not know is that he sent me one, too. [*Laughter*] In fact, he put it in my hot hand, and I read it within 48 hours. And we called Philip Howard, and we got him to come to Washington, and we asked him to work with us as he has worked with you.

So when we talk about cutting Government, I guess I'm singing to the choir and looking at the lead singer over here on my left. But I'd like to give you a report about what we are doing and what we propose to do. And I need your help and your involvement, without regard to your party, from your perspective at the State level about what the next steps are going to be. And so does the Congress.

Let me just tell you some of the things we've done already. We announced the other day that we're going to cut reports we require from the American people in half, unless there's some compelling public interest reason not to, so that people who have to file reports four times a year will go to twice a year; twice a year, once a year and so on.

We took the small business loan form from being an inch thick to a page long. Last year, we gave twice as many loans at lower cost to taxpayers than the year before I took office. We gave in Florida 1,200 loans, worth over $250 million, and under the leadership of our Vice President and the new head of SBA, we are now going to cut the SBA budget by 32 percent and increase the number of loans by 12,000 next year. That's what we ought to be doing for this Government: more performance, lower cost.

Under the able leadership of your former staffer Carol Browner, the Environmental Protection Agency is working through complicated problems from Florida to California that were mired in the courts for years. But she is doing it and, at the same time, cutting paperwork from

the EPA by 25 percent. That will save 20 million hours of work for the American people every single year.

The Environmental Protection Agency is also opening compliance centers and telling people, if you wonder whether you're in or out of compliance, come to our center, and if you're out of compliance and you show up voluntarily, we will waive the fine for 6 months while you get in compliance. No more punishment for people who are trying to do the right thing.

We have changes in the Food and Drug Administration, where we've heard a lot of complaints about things taking too long. We've reduced the time lag and the cost for permitting drugs that have absolutely no possible danger to health or to the environment, for moving antibiotics on line, for moving medical devices on line that plainly present no problem. It will put another half a billion dollars a year into the American economy, just speeding up the 140 medical devices and getting rid of 600 pages of regulation. And I'll bet you right now $100 that a year from now there will not be a single American who will come up to the President and say, "What did you do with those 600 pages of regulation? I miss them so much. I can't stand it." [*Laughter*] We are moving in the right direction.

We have changed our approach to small businesses. If a small business violates a Federal rule for the first time now, every regulator is going to be given the authority to waive the fine altogether. And if any business violates a rule but does not do so flagrantly, instead of taking a fine away from the business, the business will be given the option of taking the fine and keeping it and spending it on correcting whatever the problem was instead of giving the money to the Government. This is the kind of commonsense direction I think we ought to follow.

We've changed rules for procurement in the Defense Department. It's going to save you billions of dollars a year as taxpayers. There's going to be no more $500 hammers and $50 ashtrays, and there won't be $50 on every transaction. The rules and regulations on procurement added $50 to the cost of everything the Defense Department bought that cost under $2,500.

We had Defense Department rules that required people in our military to buy computers at twice the cost with half the capacity that you could buy them off the shelf in a store in Tallahassee. All that's been scrapped. We're moving in the right direction.

The new Congress and I have worked together on three things that I campaigned for President on that I think probably has wide support among members of both parties here that I'm very encouraged about. They passed a law that I was proud to sign that applies to Congress all the laws they impose on the private sector. High time. They passed a law that I signed last week that reduces the ability of Congress to impose upon States and local governments unfunded mandates to require you to raise taxes and change your priorities.

And both Houses of Congress have passed different versions now of the line-item veto, which I strongly support, and I believe we will reconcile them and come out with something that works, and I assure you I will do my dead-level best to use that line-item veto in a way that restrains unnecessary Government spending.

Now, here's where you come in, because we need to move to the next area where we're still having a big debate, because I think there is a right way and a wrong way to cut Government spending, a right way and a wrong way to relax regulation. And I want you to be a part of this process.

For example, we wanted to cut spending in the Agriculture Department. We closed 1,200 offices we didn't need. We think that's a better approach than reducing the School Lunch Program. We realized we had to cut some spending in the housing area. We got rid of the regional offices of HUD, and we consolidated a lot of old bureaucratic programs. We think that's a better approach than ending efforts to help homeless veterans, many of whom are still deeply troubled because of the experiences that they've had to come to grips with in their lives. We had the EPA cut regulation by 25 percent. We think that's a better approach than this "takings bill" before Congress, which 20 States in referendums have rejected because it undermines the ability of governments even to do basic zoning and could bankrupt the budget of any government that tried to implement it. So there are ways to do this that I think are right and wrong.

And let me just say one thing about the block grant proposal. When I was a Governor, I loved block grants, and I still think they're a pretty good idea in many areas. I haven't changed just

because I've become President. I like the community development block grant, and I used it effectively. But I want to remind you it's worth about half or maybe less than half of what it was when it was given in the early eighties in the Reagan administration.

The Congress gives block grants primarily to save money. And now we're talking about block grants in areas that could be really painful to the high-growth States. So I ask you, think about what's attractive about it, but look at the details. Don't get caught in the rhetoric; look at the reality. It is not fair for the Federal Government to adopt a block-grant system which flat-funds big things that are very important to the quality of life, indeed, the ability to live a decent life for millions of our people. That may be just wonderful for States with no growth or declining population. They might even make money out of the deal. But for the growth States of the country, it can be a trap. So watch it, read it, look at the fine print, and stick up for your interests. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Now, I'd like to give you three examples of where I think we have done the right thing to reduce spending and help you and help your people. And again, let me say that we need to move beyond the labels of the past. We need to put the people of this country first, and we need to keep our eye on the future. And I'd like to give you three examples with three groups of people from Florida who are up there—and I'll recognize them each in turn—that, to me, symbolize the right way to cut Government, to make college loans more affordable, to end welfare as we know it, and to make our streets safer.

One of the most important things that our administration has accomplished is to make college loans more affordable for millions of Americans by eliminating the middleman in the old college loan system, lowering the cost, and offering better repayment terms. Believe it or not, we've actually reduced the deficit, made loans more affordable to young people all across the country, and cut the hassle to the colleges and universities involved.

We've also been very strict in enforcement. No opportunity without responsibility. It was costing you in 1991 $2.8 billion a year as taxpayers in delinquent loans, people who borrowed the money and wouldn't pay it back. We have cut that rate from $2.8 billion a year down to $1 billion a year by cracking down on people who won't pay their loans. People who borrow the money ought to pay it back.

But let me say again, we have found a way to lower the cost of the college loan program to the taxpayers, give out more loans at lower cost to the students, and cut the hassle to the colleges and universities in between.

I want to introduce some of the people that are up there. Michelle Bellamy, of Orlando, is a senior criminal justice major at Florida A&M here in Tallahassee. And Rebecca and Craig Cummins, husband and wife, are 4th-year medical students at the University of Florida. I'd like to ask them to stand up there. Now, yesterday I held a regional economic conference in Atlanta, and Rebecca and Craig came and testified. Rebecca said that when they got out of medical school they'd have combined debts of $140,000, that under the old student loan program it would have taken half of their income to pay their loan obligations when they went into residency at very low pay. Under the new student loan program, they can have their choice of ways to repay the loan. And one of their choices is to pay the loan off over a longer period of time as a percentage of their income.

This means that young people will never be discouraged from borrowing money to go to college because they know they'll never be bankrupted by paying it back, even though we're going to be tougher on requiring it to be paid back.

Their loan administrator said that she thought she had died and gone to heaven when she got into this program—literally, that's what she said—because there was no hassle. They didn't have to wait weeks and weeks and weeks to get the money. There was less paperwork. And I will say again, because we took out the middleman, it lowers costs to the taxpayer.

There are 502,000 Florida students and former students who now can take advantage of this direct college loan program. They and others are using this program today. There are some other students up there with them, and I'd like to ask them to stand. All the students that are up there, would you all stand together and be recognized.

So here's decision number one for you. I made a proposal to reduce the cost of education in the Federal budget, and there's another proposal in the Congress to reduce the cost of education in the budget. You decide which one you think is best. Right now we can make only

40 percent of our schools eligible to participate in this program. My proposal is, over the next 5 years let 100 percent of America's schools decide if they want to participate in the program. It will cut the deficit by $12 billion over 6 years and get a lot more people into college loans, get a lot more people into college, and people will be able to pay them back.

The other proposal is to cap the program right where it is, which will add $6 billion to the deficit over the next 5 years—by taking that money and giving it to the middlemen who are making the loans now and making a much bigger bureaucratic hassle—and to save that money, that $6 billion, by making the loans that young people get now more expensive, by charging them interest on the loans while they're already in college and adding $2 billion a year to the cost of the loans.

Now, I think common sense says that my way of saving money, which gets you more students at lower cost and better repayment terms, is better than the alternative proposal, which gives more money to the banks in the middle, runs the deficit up, gives you fewer students, and gives them more headaches at the colleges administering the program, and far more heartache to the students in repaying it. I think it's a clear choice.

But you need to be heard on it. It's not a partisan issue. It's a special interest against a public interest issue. It's an old Washington way of doing things against a new way of doing things issue. This is a big deal, and it's a clear choice. Both parties propose to reduce the deficit from education costs, but the choices are different.

Let me give you another example. Everybody in America wants to reform the welfare system. And good for them—because we know that some people on welfare, a significant percentage, are there because they're young, they have young children, they have no education, they don't have a particularly bright future if all they do is get a check from the Government to stay in the fix they're in, that the system for too many people does not promote responsible parenting, good work, or independence.

Most people also know that the system we have today is worse than it would be because we don't enforce our child support enforcement the way we ought to and that it's complicated for you because more than a third of the child support cases in America today cross State lines, so your ability to do it is limited.

Now, last year I worked with Members of the Congress in both parties and sent a sweeping welfare reform proposal to the Congress. It was not passed. They didn't get to it, and I wish they had. This year we're going to get a welfare reform bill, and it's a good thing. It will give the States far more flexibility, no matter which system is passed.

One of the things that I think is that since we've now given 25 States, including Florida, waivers from all these Federal rules, I think every State in America ought to do anything that any State's already got the right to do. Why should you have to keep coming back to the Federal Government asking for permission to try innovative ways to change your welfare system? I don't think you should.

But I think what you've done here shows what works. And again, it's a choice we have to make. And this one is a little harder for you than the last one. But I want you to make a choice, and I want you to be heard.

In January of 1994, Florida received one of our first waivers to implement a family transition program, to accelerate the pace of moving people from welfare to work in Alachua County and Escambia County. The program reflects what we're trying to do, and I thought it was a good proposal. And apparently, it's working. It requires people to move from work to independence within 2 years, and it creates additional opportunities for people to do that by investing in education and training and child care.

And I might say, every time you interview a bunch of people on welfare, they'll always tell you, "If we had health care for our kids and child care and some way to go to work, we'll go to work." And the Florida program does that.

Now, what we want to do in the Congress is to pass a bill that will promote work, responsible parenting, and tough child support. The bill that passed the House of Representatives—I want to compliment it—does promote tough child support. We know today if we were collecting all the child support that is owed and could be paid, we could move 800,000 families off welfare today—if we were just collecting child support. And I compliment the House on passing that bill.

But the rest of the program, in my opinion, is deficient. I think it's weak on work and tough on kids. I don't think it does as much as—it certainly doesn't do as much as the Florida project does to move people from welfare to work. The attractiveness of it is it gives you a block grant. It says, "You do what you want, and what do you care what they do in Utah or Idaho or Maine." The problem is the block grant also has some strings attached and requires, for example, States to deny benefits to teenagers who have babies and to their babies until they reach the age of their majority—the mothers—and gives people the option to deny it altogether.

Now, it just seems to me that the better course is to give the States a great deal of flexibility, but to say, number one, if you have a growing caseload we shouldn't block-grant you. You can't help it if Florida is growing faster than some other States. And number two, we shouldn't punish children for the mistakes of their parents. And number three, what we really want is for people to go to work and be good parents, and we ought to have certain baseline requirements to do that.

Now, that's what I believe. And I'll tell you why I believe that. There are reasons up there, again, in the audience. Irene Marry is ending welfare as we know it. She is the mother of six from Escambia County. She participated in your program. Since joining the family transition program a year ago, she received her GED, she enrolled in training for a high-wage job as a heating and air-condition technician. She will earn a paycheck, not a welfare check. And I met some other ladies who are with her who are doing the same thing. This is your program. I think this is what America ought to do. I'd like to ask them to stand up. Please stand up, all three of you. [*Applause*]

Last example of the choice you have to make. No State in the country knows any more about crime and violence than Florida. We know that there are many reasons for crime. There are many causes of crime, and there are many proposed solutions to crime. After 6 years of partisan gridlock, last year we broke gridlock and passed the crime bill.

The crime bill had three major components: a lot of money for prisons for States that had tough sentencing provisions—you had to have certain tough sentencing provisions to get the Federal money to help build the prisons; a substantial but smaller amount of money for prevention programs—there were certain categories specified, but essentially States and local communities got to decide what worked best in prevention; and a substantial amount of money to help local communities and county jurisdictions and, to some extent, States hire law enforcement officials.

There was a total flexibility on the part of the States, virtually, in the prevention money, nearly none in the prison money, and some in the police money, but basically the money had to be used to hire police on the street and not behind desks.

Now, this bill was put together in complete cooperation with the law enforcement community. There were 11 major law enforcement groups that worked on this, along with the State attorneys general—General Butterworth knows, he was very active in this—the prosecutors association, all the law enforcement folks around the country. They told us, among other things, "You've got to have some prevention money in here. We can't jail our way out of this problem." People in law enforcement said that. And it was interesting, I mean, a lot of these folks were Republicans, and some were Democrats. But they said, "This is not a partisan deal. We live on the streets. Our badges are on every day. We cannot jail our way out of this. We have got to have some prevention money, as well."

The argument for the police was plain: Violent crime has tripled in the last 30 years in America. The number of police on the street has increased by only 10 percent. This is not high math. So we proposed to, in effect, increase by another 20 percent the number of police officers on the street. Why? Because one of the little known success stories in America in the last several years is that in community after community after community that has adopted an aggressive community policing system, the crime rate has gone down, not just because more criminals are being caught but because more crime is being prevented. There is evidence here. This is not some theory. There is evidence, city after city after city with crime rates declining where they have been able to implement aggressive community policing programs.

In Florida—and the Attorney General—I want to compliment the Attorney General on this. She set up—it used to be that law enforce-

ment groups hated dealing with the Federal Government because they had to hire a consultant to figure out how to get through the web of the Justice Department. Janet Reno instituted for smaller communities a one-page, eight-question form to get a police officer, one page, eight questions.

And since October—you know, the people who are attacking this approach say, "Communities don't really want this. They can't afford to match it. They don't like it." All I know is, since October, over half of the communities in America have asked for police grants from the Justice Department on their one-page, eight-question form. And since October, we have already awarded over 16,000 new police officers to over half of the police departments in America, almost 1,000 new officers in Florida. The Escambia Sheriff's Office is putting 20 new officers on the street, and 14 of them are with us today. I'd like to ask them to stand because that's what you got for your money.

Again, you have a choice to make. There they are. My proposal is—and let me say what the—the crime bill was paid for by a trust fund, no tax increases, no money from anything else. The 272,000 people we're going to take out of the Federal bureaucracy, all of those savings go into a trust fund to pay for this crime bill. That's how it's paid for.

Now, the House bill says that, "No, no, we don't like this. We want to spend more money on prisons but only if you comply with our sentencing requirements." No State flexibility there. "We know how you should sentence people, and if you do it our way, you can have this money. And we want to spend less money on police and prevention, but—here's the deal—we'll put it in a block grant for you and you can do what you want to with it. You won't get as much, but you can do what you want to."

It's very seductive and very attractive. You have to ask yourselves from your perspective: Should there be less on prevention? Should there be less on police? Should we really walk away from this commitment to 100,000 police officers when violent crime has tripled, only a 10-percent increase in police, and every law enforcement group in America tells us we ought to do it?

I think the answer is clear. You may disagree, but you should know—again, on the block grants, you're a growth State and your opportunities are exploding. But your problems will grow, too. So I ask you to think about it and to make your voice heard. And for goodness sakes, do your best to talk about it in terms of what puts your people first, what gets us into the future. No partisan political rhetoric; let's look at what is right for the country and what is right for our State.

I think this is a very exciting time to be alive and to be in public service. This debate we are having about the role of Government is a good thing to have. But in the end, our mission has got to be to keep the American dream alive. The idea that this is a special country, where little girls who can play the violin can come and breathe the air of freedom and fight for it for all of those who are like her who don't enjoy it.

This is a special country. And there is never going to be a time—I thought about this when the minister was praying at the beginning of the session here—the Scriptures tell us there will never be a time when human existence is free of difficulties. They are endemic to our nature and to the condition of things on this Earth.

So we have vast new opportunities and profound new challenges. And the real question is, how are we going to meet them. With all my heart, I believe that the best days of this country lie ahead of us if we make the right decisions. In a new time, the right decisions cannot be made with old rhetoric that divides us when we need to be united.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the House Chamber at the State Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to James A. Scott, president, Peter R. Wallace, speaker, and Jack Ascherk, speaker pro tempore, Florida Legislature; violinist Elizbet Lorenzo Martinez; Bill Nelson, Florida treasurer and insurance commissioner; and Bob Butterworth, Florida attorney general.

Remarks to Students at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida

March 30, 1995

The President. Thank you very much, Bill Lanthripp, for that introduction. Thank you, President Paloumpis, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for making me feel so very, very welcome here today. I also want to thank those of you who brought the little children here; it's wonderful to see them—that little girl back there in her green dress and that little girl there, this young man there; you look great. Thank you.

I want to thank some of my partners in trying to make your future better who are here with me, your Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Lawton Chiles and Buddy McKay. I thank my friend Congressman Gibbons for being here, the speaker of the house, Peter Wallace, and your representative, the majority leader of the house, Jim Davis. I thank them all for being here.

I also want to say that I almost got here in time—I got here a day ahead of the new mayor's inauguration, so I want to thank, on the next-to-the-last day of her tenure, my longtime friend, your mayor, Sandy Freedman, for doing such a good job for Tampa. And I want to wish your new mayor, Dick Greco, all the best, and I look forward to working with you.

Ladies and gentlemen, if I could start on a more serious note, I just had the opportunity to meet at the airport with the families of the two Tampa police officers, Mike Vigil and Kevin Howell, who were shot and wounded last week. I also had the opportunity to meet an HCC student, Mike Meyer, who saved one of those officers' lives because he's a certified emergency medical technician. He told the police he was a paramedic, and they brought him there. He grabbed his bag and rushed to the fallen officers, and he did a very fine job. And I had a chance to thank him for that, and it's an encouragement to all of us to learn some of the skills that he knows. You never can tell when you will need them. I understand that Officer Vigil remains in critical but stable condition, but I was just informed by his family that the doctors say his chances are now better than 50–50 that he's going to make a good recovery.

I am delighted to be back in Florida. I had the opportunity to spend the night at the Governor's mansion last night and to address the Florida Legislature today about the challenges facing our country and what we're going to do about it. Today I want to talk to you about your future. I spend a lot of time in community colleges like this one, because I think in many ways this is the most important institution in American society as we move toward the next century.

With all of the challenges we face, we basically know what works. What works is educating all of our people; what works is doing what it takes to generate more jobs; what works is bringing people together across racial and income and other lines; what works is a commitment to give more people a shot at the American dream, to grow the middle class and to shrink the under class, and to prepare for the future. And that's what community colleges do.

In a very real sense, what I have been trying to do as President is to bring that spirit and those ideas into the National Government. I've worked for a dozen years as a Governor, in which time I had the honor and privilege to spend countless hours in educational institutions, from elementary schools to community colleges, to vocational training schools, to our 4-year universities. And I found when I went to Washington that every reason that I worried about the country when I ran for President turned out to be true.

I ran because I thought this country was on the verge of a new century, dominated by the end of the cold war, the emergence of the global economy, wealth tied more to knowledge than ever before, when we had new opportunities but new challenges, and that Washington was in the grip of old-fashioned partisan political rhetoric, dividing us when we needed to be united, holding us back when we needed to go forward.

Now we are all engaged in a great debate which you hear every day on the news as you watch events unfold about what your Government should be doing in this moment. The old view was that there was a Government solution in Washington for every big problem in the country and that Government could actually