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grade proficiency test. My Administration's proposal to establish Education Opportunity Zones in high poverty urban and rural communities will help more local school systems take these and related steps to help students meet challenging standards.

As more States and localities move to end social promotions, we must help them design and implement approaches that will succeed. Therefore, I am directing you to take the following actions within 6 months:

1. *Produce and Widely Disseminate Guidelines for Educators and Policymakers on Effective Approaches to Ending Social Promotions*. Drawing on the lessons from research and practice, these guidelines should provide educators and policymakers with practical advice on how to design and implement policies that require students to meet academic standards at key transition points before being promoted. The guidelines should help schools:

- implement strategies that will prepare all students to meet the standards on time;
- end the use of remedial strategies that have been shown to be ineffective;
- provide students who do not meet the standards with immediate and effective extra help—such as after school tutoring programs and summer school—so they can be promoted on time;
- implement effective interventions for students who must be retained; and
- make appropriate use of tests and other indicators of academic performance in determining whether students should be promoted.

2. *Help States and School Districts Use Federal Education Resources to Implement Effective Practices*. The Department of Education should develop a plan to inform States, school districts, and schools how Department of Education programs and resources, such as Title 1, Goals 2000, the 21st Century Schools Program, the Comprehensive School Reform Program, and others, can be used to implement the recommendations in the guidelines described above.

Together, these initiatives can help ensure that our students receive a solid foundation in the basic skills of reading and math, and master advanced subject matters as well. They can help improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools, and ensure that students who need extra help get it without delay. They can help strengthen our public schools by raising standards, raising expectations, and restoring accountability.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at the Democratic Governors' Association Dinner

February 23, 1998

Thank you very much for that wonderful, wonderful welcome. Thank you, Governor Rossello, for your remarks and your leadership. It's good to see you and Maga here. And let me say it's a great tribute to you and to Governor O'Bannon and Judy O'Bannon and the other Governors here that this is the most successful DGA fundraiser in history. Thank you. And thank Katie Whelan and all the staff; you did a wonderful job tonight.

I'm delighted to be here with all the Governors and a lot of former Governors who came back to see me. We all had our pictures taken together—ex-Governors. And I began to think about the "ex" thing. [*Laughter*] I don't know how many of you saw the wonderful movie "Amistad," but it's a fabulous movie. But I went to the Washington premier, and I was sitting back in the audience and Anthony Hopkins, who is a magnificent actor, was portraying John Quincy Adams, who after he left the White House, served 8 terms in the Congress, and made the argument before the Supreme Court in behalf of the people who were turned into slaves on the ship and brought over here. But when he was preparing—there's a great line in the movie where John Quincy Adams says of himself—he said, "There is nothing in life more pathetic than a former President." [*Laughter*] So I got to thinking, I hope that's not true. [*Laughter*]

I like being a former Governor. I was the chairman of this group in 1980, 18 years ago. I'm the only person who ever served as chairman of this group who was not yet old enough to vote. [*Laughter*] And that's because Jim Hunt made me do it. [*Laughter*].

But for nearly 20 years now, I have followed the fortunes of the Democratic Governors. And I want to try to emphasize tonight one of the points that Governor Rossello made about the importance of the '98 elections and why it matters what the party affiliation, but more importantly, what the philosophy, the values, the direction of the Governors is and will be as we move quickly into a new century.

I'd like to begin with a kind of a representative issue that is rather unique in American public life, the issue that Governor Rossello's whole career embodies, that of Puerto Rico. This is the centennial year of Puerto Rico's affiliation with the United States. And I think that it is time that we responded to the aspirations of the 4 million U.S. citizens who live there and allow them to determine their ultimate political status.

The people in Puerto Rico have local self-government, but they do not have votes that are fully votes in their National Government. My colleague, when I was a Governor, was Carlos Romero-Barcelo, who now represents Puerto Rico in the Congress, and he does a great job. I'm glad to see him back there.

I have always said that the people of Puerto Rico should decide for themselves, and Congress ought to give them a chance to do that, what they want their relationship to the United States to be. There is now a bipartisan bill making its way through the Congress to establish a process for resolving this issue that gives Puerto Ricans the powers to vote on the long-discussed options of statehood, commonwealth, or national sovereignty, independent or linked with the United States.

Some people question the option of statehood because of the Hispanic culture of Puerto Rico. And with all respect, I disagree with them. After all, this is an issue for the 21st century for America.

Consider the history: We have made Puerto Ricans citizens. We have drafted them into the Armed Forces. We extend most laws to them, especially those that are convenient to us—the rest of us. To use their culture, to bar them from voting rights or responsibilities in our country if they so choose to seek them by majority vote is wrong. And this is not primarily about Puerto Rico, but about the rest of us. What are our values? What is our culture? How can we make one America in a world and a nation ever more diverse? We have to begin by saying, "It doesn't matter what your ethnic or racial or religious heritage is; it matters only if you embrace the ideas of the Founders as embodied in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights.

I say that because I think tonight I want to bring you back to first principles. I've spent a lot of time over the last—well, going back to at least to 1984 trying to modernize the Democratic Party, trying to get rid of all the things that people used to be able to say about us that would keep us from winning the White House, that would keep us in an almost defensive position constantly in the national political debate. I have constantly argued that we had to go beyond the debate that paralyzed Washington in the 1980's between those who said Government was the problem and those who said Government was the solution, to embrace nationally a philosophy that was embedded in the work of every Democratic Governor I ever worked with, going back to the 1970's—the belief that Government ought to be no bigger than necessary, ought to be as little inefficiency, and ought to be as little bureaucracy in the Government as possible, but that Government should be progressive, should be committed to being a good partner, should be a catalyst for new ideas at work, and most important of all, should be absolutely unequivocally committed to giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives and to making sure everyone had a fair chance at their version of the American dream.

So I spent a lot of time on that, and I think there's a lot of evidence that it works. The Government is the smallest it's been since President Kennedy was here, but we have done more to open the doors of college to all Americans, for example, than ever before. We are making the biggest investment in child health in a generation, as Governor Rossello said. My present balanced budget has the largest effort to improve kindergarten through 12th grade education in the history of the Republic. So I spent a lot of time talking about how we have modernized our party and how there is a third way that broke the logjam of the eighties. But what I

want to say to you tonight is—the most important thing is, all modernizing our party did was to give us a way of being true to the oldest ideals of both our party and our Nation.

Who came here and why in the beginning? A bunch of folks came here who had suffered all kinds of persecution, political persecution, religious persecution. And what did they want to do? They wanted to be rid of the arbitrary, abusive exercise of unlimited power by people in Government. Why? Because they thought free people, who could direct the Government instead of being directed by it, could do a good job of, first, protecting liberty; second—go back and read it at the beginning—pursuing happiness; and third, forming a more perfect Union.

And I would argue to you that at every important time in the history of this country, our country's greatness has depended upon our willingness to reaffirm those three missions. We had to deepen the meaning of our freedom, widen the circle of opportunity, and strengthen the bonds of our Union.

Now, the Democratic Party may not have always been right. But in the 20th century, from Woodrow Wilson through Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter to the present day, I don't think you have any doubt which party was more constantly standing up for always, always deepening the freedom of the American dream and broadening it to more people, and expanding the circle of American opportunity, and trying to hold this Union together and make it stronger and stronger instead of letting it be thrown apart. I don't think you have any doubt.

So I say to you tonight, if we're going to strengthen this country for the 21st century, we at the national level have to create an economy based on opportunity for all. That means we have to bring the light of free enterprise to the neighborhoods and the urban areas and the rural areas that haven't felt it yet. It means we have to give our country the best system of K-through-12 education in the world for everybody, not just a few. It means we have to do a lot more to continue to grow the economy.

Now, if we already have 4.7 percent unemployment—the lowest in 24 years—the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history, which party is most likely to finish America's mission? And you know as well as I do, those of you who are Governors or who work for Governors or who have been Governors, a great deal of the remaining work of building this economy has to be done community by community, State by State.

If we want, as I said in the State of the Union, a society based on responsibility—what does that mean? It means people ought to be able to have health care if they're good, responsible citizens and they're willing to do what they can for it. We ought to let people who are over 55, who have been cast aside by their employers, buy into the Medicare system and not be bereft for 10 years when they're very vulnerable. We ought to pass the health care Patients' Bill of Rights. We ought to do more to make child care safer and more affordable and more accessible. We ought to do more not only to protect our streets from juvenile crime but to open our schools between the time the learning in the classroom is over and the parents get home, so we give kids something positive to do and keep them out of trouble in the first place. These are the missions of building a society based on responsibility.

Now, I can do some things with the Congress to achieve those goals. But how all these programs are implemented along with welfare reform—will welfare reform be a way of empowering people to move from welfare to work so that people can succeed at work and succeed as parents and take care of their children, or will it be just a back-handed way to save money?

Now, there are a lot of Governors in the other party who have done some things I agree with. But, on balance, who do you think is more likely to build a society based on opportunity, that tries to lift everybody up and give everybody a chance and rescue the kids that have been left behind and build strong families and strong communities? I think you know the answer to that. And I think you're proud to be here tonight, just like I am, because of the answer to that question.

If we want to build a nation that lives by community—what does that mean? It means we have to continue to improve the environment even as we grow the economy—cleaner water, cleaner air, safer food, fewer toxic waste dumps. It means we have to meet our challenge of doing our part on the issue of global warming. And it means we have to do it in a way that uses technology and common sense and creativity to continue to create jobs and grow the

economy as we improve the environment. Now, which party is more likely to do that?

If we want to be one community, we have to be willing to reach across the divides of America. Look at the last 20 years. Which party has tried to win elections by bringing people together and which has tried to win elections by driving a wedge through the heart of the American electorate? I'm proud to be here tonight with all of you, and I think you know the answer to that question.

So, as I have said many times, I want to say one more time, we have to give it to our friends in the Republican Party. From the time Abraham Lincoln was elected until the time Teddy Roosevelt left office, if we are honest, we will say they did a better job than we did of standing for deeper freedom, wider opportunity, and a stronger Union. Those were not our best years. But from the time of Woodrow Wilson to the present day and toward the 21st century, we may not have always been right, but we were always on the right side.

And so, I ask you to think about that. I'm proud of the fact that our administration has done more than my two predecessors of the Republican Party in giving more power to the States. I'm proud of the fact that we have waived more Federal rules in more areas in 5 years than they did in 12 years. I'm proud of all that because I trust the concept of the States as laboratories of democracy. But the more responsibilities the Governors get, the more it matters who the Governor is.

And I want you to think about that. And when you go home tonight, I want you to ask yourself if you agree with my definition of what it means to be an American and to meet our challenges and to do the right thing at every moment of challenge and change. This is a big change time. This is huge.

You know, the other night after the State of the Union Address, our webpage had 400,000 hits on the Internet. One webpage. And, of course, there are millions upon millions of webpages. You know how many places there were on the Web when I was elected President? Fifty—50—5 years ago. And they all belonged to physicists. [*Laughter*] So if you could have gotten in, most of you would have been like me and you wouldn't have understood it. [*Laughter*] That is just a metaphor for how the world is changing. Knowledge, the whole volume of knowledge, doubling every 5 years.

Hillary came up with this idea that we should honor the end of our service here after 2 terms with a gift to the millennium entitled "Remembering the past, and imagining the future." We want to save Old Glory and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, those four things, and get communities all over America to do the same. And we want to have the biggest investment in the future in medical and other research in the history of America to look toward the future.

But in the end, all this newfangled stuff and all this change will only work to make us a happier, healthier, stronger people if we end where we started. That great line from T.S. Eliot, "the end is in our beginning"—we have to end where we started. You be proud when you leave here tonight, because you belong to a party that is fighting to expand and deepen the meaning of freedom and to widen the circle of opportunity and to make this a stronger United States of America. I'm proud, and I'm proud of you for being here.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Democratic Governors' Association chairman Gov. Pedro Rossello of Puerto Rico and his wife, Maga; Democratic Governors' Association Vice Chairman Gov. Frank O'Bannon of Indiana and his wife, Judy; Democratic Governors' Association Executive Director Katie Whelan; and Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina.