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Remarks to the State Legislature in Concord, New Hampshire

February 12, 1992

Mr. Speaker, thank you, sir, and Ellie. Delighted to be with you. And Mr. President, Ed Dupont, and Andrea; and Mr. Chief Justice; members of the executive council; and of course, my special friend Governor Gregg. I am just delighted to be back here. And I want to single out three visitors that have been introduced here just a minute ago, Senator Rudman, Governor Sununu, and Congressman Zeliff. I'm just delighted that they're back here with us today. And my respects to a former United States Senator who has gone straight, one of your own, Gordon Humphrey, back here now.

And ladies and gentlemen of the New Hampshire State Legislature, first, my thanks for that warm welcome back. I decided to come here today because I figured it's been a while since the people of New Hampshire have heard a political speech. [*Laughter*]

New Hampshire's legislature is really the living legacy of Lincoln's words, of, by, and for the people. I look out at all the remarkable men and women who balance the responsibilities of work and home with this public trust. What leads you to serve? It can't be the salary. That's not enough to cover two tickets to the Celtics games. But what sustains this State is a tradition as old as America itself, a commitment to self-government that stretches from Pittsburg to Pelham, from Claremont to Conway, to every corner of this State. New Hampshire looks to government as a last resort, not as the first answer to each and every problem. It doesn't see people's paychecks as potential revenue. Its rule is right: Limit government, not freedom.

This body governs itself the way we as citizens want to be governed, by the rules of common sense and fairplay. Up here, you manage to avoid being enlightened by liberal economists. New Hampshire lawmakers operate on the radical notion that a legislature should spend no more than it takes in. New Hampshire lawmakers guarantee every bill a public hearing and every bill a vote. It's time for the United States Congress to follow your lead.

Twelve years ago, under the national leadership of my friend and yours, my supporter, President Ronald Reagan, this State helped spark a new American revolution, a revolution that marked the end of a weary era and a new birth for freedom. Together we made America proud. Together we made America strong. Together we made America respected in the eyes of all the world.

We fought great battles. We stood fast against imperial communism, and we watched walls the world over come tumbling down. For 45 years, we fought in the trenches of the cold war, and we won. And let me tip my hat to every man and woman who ever served and to the American taxpayer, because communism didn't just fall. It was pushed.

Finally, just one year ago, we drew a line in the sand and helped defend a small nation and a grand ideal. We said international law would be upheld, and aggression would not stand. And with our coalition partners, we kicked Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

One thing more about Desert Storm. There are those who didn't support us then, and there are those who second-guess us now. Not New Hampshire. As Commander in Chief, let me thank this legislature for its resolution in support of Desert Storm. Half a world away, to the men and women who carried the battle, your support gave them the strength to succeed, knowing that the people were behind them. In those difficult days, when our troops laid it on the line, New Hampshire did not hesitate.

We did these things because we had the courage to lead. And because we led, America is free. America is safe. America is at peace.

Yes, dangers remain, dark corners of the world not yet blessed by freedom. No, our work in the world is not yet over. But the great struggles we've won, the great changes we've seen do more than open new worlds. They open new opportunities

for us at home. And this we know: If we can change the world, we can change America. But for us to move forward, for us to lead the world, we've got to get America's economy moving again.

Last month, I spoke to the American people and spelled out my plan to pull this country out of recession and into recovery. I know all of you have heard plenty about plans that promise the Moon. But let me say to the citizens of New Hampshire, judge my plan by its first principle: Government is too big, and it spends too much.

We put a stop order on new Federal regulation. We've begun a 90-day review, 90 days to take a hard look at regulations that hurt more than they help. The day of overregulation is just that, over.

We declared war on frivolous lawsuits. If this country rewarded success as easily as we slap on a lawsuit, our economy would be well on its way.

We've worked to control spending. I've called on Congress to eliminate, cut out altogether, 246 Federal programs. One thing would make it a little easier. Give me the tools, and I will finish the job. Give me that line-item veto, and watch what can be done.

I took action with the authority that I have as President, and then I challenged the Congress to act. I set out a two-plan part to ensure economic growth: an immediate action plan to spark recovery and then a long-term plan for the future.

The people of New Hampshire have a right to ask: We've been hit hard; too many of us have lost our jobs, even lost our homes; what will this plan do for us? Fair question.

First, my plan will bolster the real estate market. In New Hampshire and across the country, real estate will lead the way to economic recovery. My plan helps New Hampshire homebuyers. It provides a $5,000 tax credit to first-time buyers: $2,500 this year, $2,500 next. And it lets them draw on their IRA accounts to make that purchase, penalty-free. For the average New Hampshire family buying the average New Hampshire house, my plan means tax breaks worth 6 months of mortgage payments. For families all over this State, that's an American dream come true.

And what's good for the families who want to buy that first-time home is good for the people who build them. Nationwide, experts in the housing industry predict that my plan will create a boom in homebuilding. In this State alone, the plan will generate 1,000 new housing starts and pump $120 million into the State economy. And that then, best of all, will put more than 2,000 New Hampshire construction workers back on the job.

My plan will also help the pioneering high-tech firms that call New Hampshire home. Pass this plan and give companies an investment tax allowance, helping growing firms accelerate investment. Make the R&E tax, that tax credit, a permanent part of the Federal Tax Code. Pass my plan and get investment flowing again. Cut the capital gains rate to 15 percent. That is what is needed. Pass my plan and give American companies a competitive edge. No games. No gimmicks. Just a plan that works. Pass my plan and get New Hampshire moving again.

Now, that's a summary of my short-term part of it, the short-term action plan. For the long term, we've got work to do as well, steps we can take right now to guarantee progress and prosperity into the next American century. We get there by investing in the technologies of tomorrow—you're good at that here in New Hampshire—tomorrow, with Federal support of R&D at record levels; it will help. We need to share the results, get the great ideas generated by public funds out into the private sector, off the drawing board and onto store shelves. Our national technology initiative will do just that. And right now at M.I.T., the first regional meeting is underway.

We get to the future by letting the States do what they do best. Far too often, States have their hands tied by Washington. Congress passes a mandate, and they pass you the buck. You get stuck raising taxes. New Hampshire's constitution, I'm told, prevents this body from burdening communities with unfunded mandates. Well, if it's good enough for New Hampshire, why not for the rest of the country?

Look at the problems that plague us today, crime, drugs, the erosion of moral

values. Trace each one to its root, its root causes, and you'll see one common factor, the decline of the American family. This country must reaffirm a simple truth: When the family comes first, America is first.

We get to the future by strengthening the family. Look at our approach, for example, to child care. Our opponents backed a scheme that would have created a brave new child care bureaucracy. We preserved choice, and we put parents first. My plan puts the family first, this new one, and provides an extra $500 exemption for every child.

And just last week I announced a comprehensive health care reform, reforms that will keep costs down and open up access to affordable health care for all Americans, providing new coverage to almost 30 million uninsured Americans. And we'll do it through choice, not through central control. We've got—and I think every American would admit this or claim it—we've the best quality health care in the world, the best. And the last thing the American people want is a system that puts the Government between you and your doctor. And we're not going to do that.

Every parent knows our children are our future. That's why our health plan focuses on the children, increasing support for immunization, the early prevention that gives each kid a healthy start. And that's why we are funding Head Start at an all-time high, and it's the reason we're asking more of our schools. We must challenge ourselves to revolutionize, to literally reinvent American education. New Hampshire has joined the nonpartisan America 2000 revolution. Governor, we're grateful to you for your leadership. And let common sense be our guide, and let common sense begin by letting parents choose which school is best for their child.

Finally, we meet America's destiny by expanding trade, opening new markets for American goods. I'm proud of the progress we've made, working to open markets from Asia to Europe to the Americas. Just this week, I signed a new investment accord, just yesterday, with the nations of Latin America. Last month, the agreement we reached with Japan will help computer companies right here in this State, help them get into that government-owned—the government computer market in Japan. That's a solid record in 3 years' time, a good start that we'll make even better.

But free trade has come under attack these days. The drumbeat mounts for some new isolationism; this one, an economic retreat from reality. The simple truth is, protectionism isn't a prescription for prosperity. Boil away all the tough talk, all the swagger, and all the patriotic posturing, and protectionism amounts to nothing more than a smokescreen for a country that's running scared. And that's not the America you and I know.

The America we know is a country ready to take on the world and ready to rise to new levels, not run for cover. Our national symbol isn't the ostrich; it's the eagle. And that's the way it should be. Never in this Nation's long history has America turned its back on a challenge, and we are not going to start now. A proud America will never be protectionist. It will never be protectionist.

Bring it close to home, make no mistake about it, no State would be hurt more by economic isolationism than New Hampshire. Right now, New Hampshire businesses reap more than $1.2 billion a year from exports. Across this State, that's 35,000 jobs tied directly to foreign trade. And even in these hard times, New Hampshire's manufacturing exports increased 80 percent in the past 5 years alone.

It's an economic fact of life: If we close our markets, other countries will close theirs. And when the walls go up, who gets hurt? That's an easy one. You do. You get hurt. And I cannot, and I will not, let that happen to New Hampshire or to any of the rest of the States in this country. We are not going to have protectionism. We're going to compete, not cut and run. And let the world know, we're in this to win.

Two weeks ago, I urged the Congress to work with me to do the will of the American people. I laid out the action plan I've sketched, that I've outlined here, and yes, I set a deadline to help move the Congress along the way. Today, back in Washington, maybe at this very minute, the House Ways and Means Committee is at work; they

started work this morning. And I challenge them once again to pass this short-term action plan, seven specific actions to stimulate, immediately stimulate the economy. They say they are taking up my plan, but they are not.

So I'll say again: Don't relabel my plan. Don't change it. Don't use it as a way to raise tax rates. Just pass this plan, and give the American people a chance to see whether it's going to work, as I'm confident it will. And look, later on—get this passed—later on we can all debate it, put it out there in the political arena, add to it, detract from it. We can all have a big, strong debate.

It must sound strange to the people in this chamber, strange for you legislators who meet for only 45 days a year to hear Congress complain that 52 days isn't enough time to get this done. They say the deadline is arbitrary. They say the deadline is too early. They say the deadline is unfair.

And I say: The deadline is March 20, and we're going to hold their feet to the fire. By March 20th, I want to be able to report to the American people that the liberation of America's economy has begun. I ask the people in this chamber, I ask the good people of New Hampshire to give me your strong support and send a message to the Congress. Tell them the time has come to act.

Today is a special day for me, for Barbara, for my family as well. I think back across the years to the lesson I learned long ago, and I look ahead in wonder to what can be. And I know there is no higher honor than serving this great Nation.

I want to thank you. I want to thank you, New Hampshire, for this warm welcome. And may God bless this land we share. We have much to be grateful for in these troubled times, and I want to be your leader for 4 more years. Thank you very much, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

Note: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. at the statehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Harold W. Burns, speaker of the New Hampshire House, and his wife, Ellie; Edward C. Dupont, Jr., president of the New Hampshire Senate, and his wife, Andrea; and David A. Brock, State chief justice.

Remarks to Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters in Concord

February 12, 1992

Thanks for that welcome back. And Dick, thank you so very much, and may I salute you, sir; the Governor, of course. And we've got our officials here, Senator Rudman, Congressman Zeliff, and former Governor John Sununu. And I'm just delighted to be here.

Before I say anything else, I see some new faces in law enforcement here and firefighting. And I see some older faces in law enforcement and, sorry, firefighting here. [*Laughter*] But I just want to say that Barbara and I are grateful to those of you with whom we've interacted over the last 12 years in one way or another, mainly over on the eastern part of the State, over on the seacoast. So many of you have had these odd hours, and I'm sure we've inconvenienced your families, but we are very grateful to each and every one of you. And of course, we're grateful for your service to your State, and we're grateful for your line of service. I hope that our administration will stay with this position of backing the firefighters and backing those out in law enforcement all the way.

I want to just mention a couple of things today in terms of the changes in the world. I won't give you the full load on foreign policy or the changes that have happened. But you know, we're having some tough times here. And I think it's good that we sometimes keep things in full perspective.

We've seen an awful lot of change in the world in the last few years. We've seen communism crumble in Eastern Europe.