AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

innovation, we can build a world transformed by human ingenuity and creativity—a world in which economic activity and the natural environment support and sustain one another.

This is the vision that Jackson, Muskie, and Dingell articulated more than two decades ago when they wrote in the National Environmental Policy Act that we should strive to live in productive harmony with nature and seek to fulfill the social and economic needs of future generations. We share a common responsibility to see beyond the urgent pressures of today and think of the future. We share a common responsibility to speak for our children, so that they inherit a world filled with the same opportunity that we had. This is the vision for which we work today and the guiding principle behind my Administration's environmental policies.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
April 6, 1995.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 7.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Dallas, Texas
April 7, 1995

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you. "Fishbait" Favre. It's got kind of a nice ring, doesn't it? [*Laughter*] I knew he was born in New Orleans before he ever said it. I love to listen to people from New Orleans talk.

I thank you for that kind introduction. Your convention program chair, Bob Haiman, and your incoming president, Bill Ketter, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very glad to be here.

I thought that in addition to me you were going to hear from three people who had run, are running, and were about to run for President. But only Bill Weld showed up. I hope he stays in the "about to run." He and Steve Merrill are very impressive men, and I'm glad that they came here and gave the Republican point of view.

It's a privilege to be here. I'd like to begin by saying that I am very proud, and I know you are, for the work that the Inter American Press Association has done in its Declaration of Chapultepec. I know that you and the Newspaper Association of America have worked tirelessly for press freedoms all throughout the Americas. And just before I came out here I was proud to sign a Charter of Endorsement for the Declaration of Chapultepec. And I thank you for giving me that opportunity and for what you have done to advance the cause of a free press.

I was talking to a friend of mine the other day who said, "Well, in the '94 election we discovered the limits of liberalism, and now we're about to discover the limits of conservatism." And it put me in mind of a story I once heard about the—and actually, I thought about it because I met Mr. Favre—about the late Huey Long, who, when he was Governor and he was preaching his share-the-wealth plan, was out in the country one day at a little country crossroads. And he had all the people gathered up. And he was going on about how the people were being plundered by the organized wealthy interests in Louisiana.

And he saw a guy out in the crowd that he knew and he said, "Brother Jones, if you had three Cadillacs, wouldn't you give up one of them so we could gather up the kids and take them to school during the week and take them to church on the weekend?" He said, "Sure, I would." He said, "And if you had $3 million, wouldn't you give up just a million of it so we could put a roof over everybody's head and make sure everybody had food to eat?" He said, "Well, of course I would." He said, "And if you had three hogs—" He said, "Wait a minute, Governor, I've got three hogs." [*Laughter*]

Anyway, that's the limits of liberalism. Now we're about to discover the limits of conservatism.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are at a historic moment in our country's history: on the verge of a new century, living in a very different kind

of economy with a bewildering array of challenges and opportunities. In 1992 and in 1994, the voters spoke out and demanded bold changes in the way we govern and the policies we pursue. They know better than anyone else that they are living in a time with new challenges that demand new answers.

In the last 2 years, my administration has begun to meet those challenges. I ran for President because I felt we were being victimized by 12 years of gridlock in which the deficit had gone up, the wealthiest Americans had done quite well, the middle class had stagnated, and the poor were in trouble, in which the American dream was really at risk because half of the American people were working for the same or lower wages that they had made 15 years earlier.

I had a clear mission. I wanted to grow the middle class, shrink the under class, and speed up the opportunities for entrepreneurs. I wanted to promote the mainstream values of responsibility and work, family and community. I wanted to reform the Government so that we could enhance opportunity, shrink bureaucracy, increase our security, and most important of all, empower people through education to make the most of their own lives.

In the first 2 years we've made good progress. The economy is up, and the deficit is down. We've expanded educational opportunities from Head Start through more college loans that are more affordable. The American people are marching toward more security because there are no Russian missiles pointed at the children of our country for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, because we passed a serious crime bill that will lower the crime rate in many of our communities throughout the country, and because we've begun to address some of the problems of family security with the Family and Medical Leave Act. And certainly, we have done a lot to shrink and to reform the Government's bureaucracy.

But it is not enough. Too many Americans don't yet feel any of those benefits. Too many still feel uncertain about their own future, and too many people are overwhelmingly concerned about the social and the underlying moral problems of our society. And so in 1994, they voted to give the Republicans a chance to run the Congress.

In the last 100 days, the House of Representatives has passed a series of bold initiatives. We will soon begin the second 100 days of this Congress. In the first 100 days, the mission of the House Republicans was to suggest ways in which we should change our Government and our society. In the second 100 days and beyond, our mission together must be to decide which of these House proposals should be adopted, which should be modified, and which should be stopped.

In the first 100 days, it fell to the House of Representatives to propose. In the next 100 days and beyond, the President has to lead the quiet, reasoned forces of both parties in both Houses to sift through the rhetoric and decide what is really best for America. In making these decisions, it is absolutely vital that we keep alive the spirit and the momentum of change. But the momentum must not carry us so far that we betray our legacy of compassion, decency, and common sense.

We have entered a new era. For years, out here in the country, the old political categories have basically been defunct, and a new political discussion has been begging to be born. It must be now so in Washington, as well. The old labels of liberal and conservative, spender and cutter, even Democrat and Republican, are not what matter most anymore. What matters most is finding practical, pragmatic solutions based on what we know works in our lives and our shared experiences so that we can go forward together as a nation. Ideological purity is for partisan extremists. Practical solution, based on real experience, hard evidence, and common sense, that's what this country needs.

We've been saddled too long with a political debate that doesn't tell us what we ought to do, just who we ought to blame. And we have got to stop pointing fingers at each other so that we can join hands.

You know, our country has often moved forward spurred on by purists, reformists, populist agendas which articulated grievances and proposed radical departures. But if you think about our most successful periods of reform, these initiatives have been shaped by Presidents who incorporated what was good, smoothed out what was rough, and discarded what would hurt. That was the role of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson in the aftermath of the populist era. That was the role of Franklin Roosevelt in the aftermath of the La Follette progressive movement. And that is my job in the next 100 days and for all the days I serve as President.

We stand at a crossroads. In one direction lies confrontation and gridlock; in the other lies achievement and progress. I was not elected President to pile up a stack of vetoes. I was elected President to change the direction of America. That's what I have spent the last 2 years doing and that's what I want to spend the next 100 days and beyond doing. Whether we can do that depends upon what all of us in Washington do from here on out.

So I appeal today to Republicans and to Democrats alike to get together, to keep the momentum for change going, not to allow the energy and longing for change now to be dissipated amid a partisan clutter of accusations. After all, we share much common ground.

For example, in 1992, I was elected to end welfare as we know it. That was part of my New Covenant of opportunity and responsibility. In 1994, the Republicans made the same demand with their contract. In the last 2 years, I have already given 25 States, one-half of the country, the opportunity to do just that on their own. And I introduced the most sweeping welfare reform the country had ever seen. I want to work with the Congress to get real welfare reform.

In 1992, I was elected to slash the deficit. That also was part of my New Covenant. In 1994, the Republican contract called for a continuing deficit reduction and movement toward a balanced budget. Well, I cut the deficit by $600 billion, cut 300 programs; I proposed to consolidate or eliminate 400 more. I want to cut the deficit. Except for the interest run up between 1981 and 1992, our budget would be in balance today. My administration is the only one in 30 years to run an operating surplus. I will work with the Republicans to reduce the deficit.

In 1992, I was elected to shrink the size of the Federal Government, which I have done. That, too, was a part of my New Covenant. In 1994, the Republican contract said we should shrink the Government. I have already cut 100,000 bureaucratic positions, and we are on the way under budgets already passed to reducing the Government by 270,000, to its smallest size since President Kennedy occupied this office. I want to work with Congress to reduce the size of Government.

We both want tax cuts, less intrusive Government regulations, the line-item veto, the toughest possible fight against crime. These were a part of the New Covenant and a part of the Republican contract. In 2 years, we have made real progress on all these fronts, but we can, and we should do more.

We are near many breakthroughs. The real issue is whether we will have the wisdom and the courage to see our common ground and walk on it. To do that, we must abandon extreme positions and work together. This is no time for ideological extremism. Good-faith compromising, negotiating our differences, actually listening to one another for a change, these are the currency of a healthy democracy.

In that spirit, I come here today to outline where I stand on the remaining items in the Republican contract and the unfinished business of my New Covenant.

Let's begin with taxes. In 1993, I made a down payment on the middle-class tax cut I advocated when I ran for President. We cut taxes for 15 million working families. What that means on average is that this year a family of four with an income of $25,000 a year or less will have about $1,000 in lower tax bills. We did this to ensure that nobody who works full-time and has children should live in poverty. If you want to reform the welfare system, you must reward work and parenting.

So I want a tax cut to expand, to include more members of the middle class. Why? Because half the American people are working for the same or lower incomes they were making 15 years ago. And we've had a recovery that's produced 6.3 million new jobs, the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 25 years, and we need to spread the benefits of the recovery.

But this $200 billion tax cut, which is really more than 3 times that if you look at it over a 10 year period, is a fantasy. It's too much. It's not going to happen. We can't afford it. A realistic cut would be somewhere around a third of that. That's something we can afford. In the world we're living in up there, if we go beyond that, what you're going to see is no success at deficit reduction or horrible injustice to the most vulnerable people in our country. So we can't pass that. Let's get over it and talk about what we can pass and work on doing it. Let's target a tax cut to the right people and for the right purpose.

We have to choose: Do you want a tax cut for the wealthy or for the middle class? The Republican plan gives half of the benefits to

the 10 percent of the people who are best off, and most importantly, to the 10 percent of our people who have done very, very well in the last 15 years. Twenty percent of the benefits go to the top one percent of our people. They have done very well in the new global economy. The middle class has suffered the stagnant incomes. Let's direct the tax benefits to those people.

But we also have to choose what kind of tax break. Shall we just put money in people's pockets? Or shouldn't we do something that will strengthen families and increase the whole wealth and success of the United States over the long run? Let's help our people get the education and job training they need.

The technology revolution, the global economy, these are dividing opportunity at home and abroad. The middle class is splitting apart. And the fault line is education. Those who have it do well; those who don't are in trouble. So let's use the tax cut as I propose in the middle class bill of rights as sort of a scholarship given by America to people for their cost of education after high school. And let's provide for an IRA that people can withdraw from, tax-free, to meet the exigencies that their families face: college education, health care costs, first-time home, care of an elderly parent. These things will strengthen our country and we can afford it.

Let's take welfare reform. As I said, both of us, both the Republican contract and my New Covenant, have focused heavily on welfare reform. What do we agree on? That there ought to be a limit to welfare; that there ought to be flexibility for the States; that we ought to have the toughest possible child support enforcement; and that people have to take more responsibility for their own lives and for the children they bring into this world.

But the current House bill focuses primarily on cutting costs. It's weak on work and tough on kids. It punishes young people for past mistakes. We must require them, instead, to look to the future and in the future to be responsible parents, to be responsible workers, to be responsible students, and then give them the opportunity to do that.

The House bill also punishes young children for the sins of their parents. I think that's wrong. Rich or poor, black, white, or brown, in or out of wedlock, a baby is a baby, a child is a child. It's part of our future, and we have an obligation to those children not to punish them for something over which they had absolutely no control.

Now, that's where I disagree. But look what we agree on. We are near historic change. We can do this. We can make a difference. We can break the culture of welfare, and we can do something good for our country to support the values we all believe in. And we can give these children a better future. But to do it, we're going to have to talk through our differences and get beyond the rhetoric to how these real lives work and not stand on the sidelines posturing for political gain.

Let's take cutting the deficit. The balanced budget amendment is dead. But now we have to get specific. How are we going to cut the deficit and move this budget toward balance? If we can focus on cuts, not making partisan points, that's the first step. There are cuts I can't live with. There are cuts the Republicans can't live with. Let's avoid them and make cuts we can all live with.

We shouldn't cut help for our children. That builds our future. We shouldn't cut their education, their immunization, their school lunches, the infant formulas, or the nutrition programs. There's no need to cut them. So far, based on the action they've taken, the Republicans want the poor in this country to bear the burden of two-thirds of their proposed cuts and only get 5 percent of the benefit of the tax cuts. It is not right. It is wrong. But that doesn't mean we don't have to cut the budget and reduce the deficit.

The rescission package that passed the Senate last night gives us a model about how we should proceed. The House passed a rescission package with completely unacceptable cuts in education, child nutrition, environment, housing, and national service. The Senate Republicans, to their credit, restored several of these cuts. I insisted on restoring even more and replacing them with better cuts. And almost every one of the Democrats in the Senate agreed.

So yesterday, over the course of the debate, they worked that out. Those cuts were restored as well. There will still be a $16 billion reduction in the deficit this year. The bill passed 99–0 in the Senate, and I will sign the Senate bill if the House and the Senate will send it to me. That's how we should be doing the business of America.

Let's talk about the line-item veto. As I said before, that was in the Republican contract, and

I campaigned for President on it in 1992. I appeal to Congress to pass it in its strongest form. I appeal to members of my own party who have reservations about it to support it as well. The line-item veto has now passed both the Senate and the House.

If you look at how it passed the Senate, that's an example of how we can make this system work. I strongly supported it. I campaigned to Democratic Senators and asked them to support it. They worked out their differences, and it passed overwhelmingly in the Senate.

The President and the Congress both need the power to cut spending. If you doubt it, if you doubt it, look at the bill that Congress recently passed to restore to 3.2 million self-employed Americans, farmers, small businesspeople, professionals, and all their family members, the 25 percent deduction for the cost of their health insurance. That was a part of my health care plan. I desperately want to do that. We ought to do more. They ought to be treated just like corporations. It is imperative to sign it. But hidden in that bill was a special tax break for people who did not need it. If I had the Senate version of the line-item veto, I could sign the bill and help the people who are entitled to it, and veto the special break. This is the kind of thing that's been hidden in bills of Congress forever. We can now do something about it, and we ought to do it.

Political reform, something that was also in the Republican contract: Two of the ten items in the Republican contract have actually become law. And two, term limits and the balanced budget amendment, have been defeated. Of the two that have become law, they were both about political reform, and they were also both part of my 1992 commitments to the American people. One applies to Congress the laws they impose on the private sector. The other limits the ability of Congress to impose unfunded mandates on State and local government. I was proud to sign them both. They will advance the cause of responsible Government in this country.

But political reform means more. It must include, I believe, both lobbying reform and campaign finance reform. If you doubt how much we need lobby reform, just go back and refer to the story that was rightly printed just a few days ago about how in this session of Congress you have lobbyists actually sitting at the table with Congressmen, writing bills for them and then explaining to them what the bills mean. It seems to me that since these bills help the people the lobbyists represent, but drastically restrict the ability of the Government to act in the areas of the environment, in protecting our people, we need some significant reform in our lobbying laws. So I don't think we should stop there.

Regulatory reform, another big item in the Republican contract: There are lots of horror stories. Every one of you probably knows a story that shows where a bureaucrat overreached or there were too many regulations or there was too little common sense. I am committed to changing the culture of regulation that has dominated our country for a long time. I have gone around espousing to everybody that they ought to read Mr. Howard's book "The Death of Common Sense."

But for 2 years, we have been working through the reinventing Government initiative that the Vice President has headed to change the culture of regulation. We deregulated banking. We deregulated intrastate trucking. We have reformed the procedures of the SBA. We scrapped the 10,000-page Federal personnel manual. We have dramatically changed the way the General Services Administration operates in ways that have saved hundreds of millions of dollars for the taxpayers and put more competition into the process, thanks to the GSA Director, Roger Johnson, who happens to be here with me today. We are working on these things to move forward.

But we must do more. And yet, surely, the answer is not to stop the Government from regulating what it needs to regulate. If the Republicans send me a bill that would let unsafe planes fly or contaminated meat be sold or contaminated water continue to find itself into city water systems, I will veto it. I will veto it. But if Congress will just sit down with me and work out a reasonable solution for more flexible regulatory reform, we can create an historic achievement.

I agree that Congress has a role to play. I agree that Congress sometimes hears things about the way regulations work that people in the executive branch don't. Congresswoman Johnson and Congressman Bryant and Congressman Geren flew down here with me today. They're out there all the time talking to their members. They may hear things we don't. That's why I approve of the Senate's 45-day override

legislation. But I will veto any bill that lets a bunch of lawyers tie up regulation for years. We've got too much of that as it is.

So I say, flexibility, yes; reform, yes; but paralysis and straightjacketing, no.

Let's talk about legal reform. Are there too many lawsuits? Of course, there are. Do jury awards once in a while get out of hand? Yes, they do. Does this affect the insurance system in the country? It has an impact on it. But at a time when we're giving more and more responsibility to the States in which one of the signal ideas of the Republican contract that I largely agree with is that the State and local governments should have more responsibility, do we really want to take the entire civil justice system away from the States for the first time in 200 years? I don't think so.

Let me give you a couple of examples. Should we put justice out of the reach of ordinary people with a "loser pay" rule? No. Think about it this way: "Loser pays" will keep ordinary citizens from exercising their rights in court just as a poll tax used to keep ordinary people of color and poverty from exercising their right to vote. I will veto any bill with a "loser pay" requirement such as that that was in the House bill. I don't think it's right.

Punitive damages: they could stand some reform but not artificial ceilings. Punitive damages are designed to deter bad future conduct. Now, if you have a national ceiling of $250,000 think what that means—$250,000 may be too burdensome for a small-business person who loses a lawsuit. You don't want to put them out of business unless they're malicious. But does anybody seriously believe that $250,000 will have any kind of significant deterrent impact on a giant multinational corporation? So let's negotiate realistic reforms that improve the system, but don't wreck it.

Crime: Crime was a big part of the New Covenant, a big part of why I ran for President. The personal security of the American people should be our first concern. And we delivered. After 6 years we broke gridlock, and I signed a crime bill that was endorsed by all the major law enforcement organizations in the country, the cities, the counties, the prosecutors, the attorneys general, everybody. And it had bipartisan support, too, until we got close to the last election; Republicans and Democrats cosponsoring all major provisions.

What was in the crime bill? It had more punishment, "three strikes and you're out," expansion of capital punishment. It had more police, 100,000 police on our street. And I might say that over half of the communities in this country have already received grants under the police program just since last October. We're ahead of schedule and under budget. There are already about 17,000 police officers authorized and funded to be hired. It had more prisons, something the Republicans very much wanted, as long as the States agreed to change their sentencing procedures. And it had more prevention programs, something the police demanded. The police said, "You cannot police and punish and imprison your way out of the crime crisis. You have got to give these children in our country something to say yes to. You've got to give them a reason to stay off drugs, a reason to stay in school, a reason to believe they can have a future." So it had all those things.

Now, if the Republicans wish to continue to try to repeal the commitment to 100,000 police or to repeal the assault weapons ban, they have a perfect right to do it. But if they send me those provisions, I will veto them. On the other hand, while the rest of their crime bill needs some work and I disagree with some provisions of it, it has some good points. If we can build on the '94 crime bill instead of tear it down, we can continue our efforts to make the American people more secure. So let's do that. Let's pass a crime bill we can be proud of, that builds the country up and makes our citizens safer.

The environmental protection area: A big part of my New Covenant was protecting our environment and promoting our natural resources. It's something we can all give to our children whether we die rich or poor. And it is our obligation to our future economic health, because no nation over the long run succeeds economically unless you preserve your environment.

I just got back from Haiti, and I can tell you one of the biggest obstacles to the survival of democracy in that country is they have ripped all the trees off every hill in the country, and we need to plant tens of millions of trees. We could put half the young people in the country to work for a year just trying to undo the environmental devastation. And unless we do it, they're not going to be able to regain their economic footing.

I cannot and I will not compromise any clean water, any clean air, any protection against toxic

waste. The environment cannot protect itself. And if it requires a Presidential veto to protect it, then that's what I'll provide.

I will also veto the House-passed requirement that Government pay property owners billions of dollars every time we act to defend our national heritage of seashores or wetlands or open spaces. If that law were on the books in every State in the country today, then local governments would completely have to give up zoning or be bankrupt every time they try to change a zoning law. That is why every time it's been on the ballot in a State—and it's been on the ballot 20 times, including in conservative, Republican States—it has been defeated. The people of Arizona voted against it by a 20-point margin last November.

Well, the people do not have to vote—do not have a vote on this issue in Congress. But I do, and I'll use it. This is not a good law.

Peacekeeping: Decades from now when we have our next Republican President—[*laughter*]—he or she will be very grateful that I refused to approve the so-called peacekeeping legislation passed by the House. The United Nations and the world community did not struggle through 45 years of stagnation because of Soviet vetoes to have to deal with a new stagnation because of an American congressional veto.

The United Nations is 50 years old this year. But it's only 4 or 5 years old as a real force for international stability and security as it was imagined by Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower and Arthur Vandenberg, responsible Republicans and Democrats. So let us learn from the United Nations mistakes in Somalia and the United Nations successes in Haiti and throughout the world, about how we can best keep the peace in partnership with our neighbors throughout the world.

In Haiti there were almost 30 countries in there with us and the multinational force, and under the U.N. mission there now, well over 30 countries, people who came from a long way away because they know the world must work together to promote humanity and peace and democracy and decency. Let us not walk away from the United Nations and isolate America from the world.

There's some other things I want to talk about. Those are the items in the Republican contract, many of which were also in my New Covenant and where I stand on them. But I want to talk about some other items as well, the unfinished business of the agenda that I ran for President on.

I was elected to fix a broken Government, to relight the dormant fires of the economy, to make sure that working families reap the just reward of their effort and are able to pass their children the same dream they had, and to end the sort of something-for-nothing mentality that had crept into our country by restoring the values of responsibility and work and family and community.

The Republican contract, even where I agree with it, does not deal with much of what is really at the heart of America's challenges today, opportunity and security for working Americans. So let me talk about these issues.

Health care: In the State of the Union I said I had learned that I bit off more than I could chew last year, and we have to reform health care a step at a time. But I haven't forgotten the need to reform health care. Everybody knows we still have problems. It costs too much. There are a lot of people who have inadequate coverage. There are a lot of people who have no coverage at all, and there are millions of Americans who could lose their coverage at any time. So I call on Republicans to join me in taking this one step at a time, beginning with things the majority of them have long endorsed:

First, making benefits portable so you don't lose your health care when you change jobs.

Second, requiring coverage for families with a preexisting condition so the whole family doesn't lose health care just because there's been one sick child. I saw a couple from Delaware on the street in Washington a couple of months ago when I was taking my jog, the best-looking family you ever saw. The young man and woman looked to be in their late thirties. They had five children. Their fourth child had a birth defect. And he was a small businessman. None of them had any health insurance. That's an intolerable situation in this country, and we shouldn't put up with it.

The third thing we ought to do is to establish voluntary pools, such as those established in Florida and many other States, which allow small businesses and self-employed people to buy health care on the same terms as those of us who work for Government or big corporations can buy it, to put some competitive power behind their need.

The fourth thing we should do is to expand home care for the elderly, so that families who are struggling to keep their elderly parents and grandparents at home in a more independent living setting have some alternative before putting them into a nursing home when it will almost certainly cost the Government much, much more money.

And finally, we ought to do our best in the way of coverage to help families keep their coverage when they're unemployed for an extended period of time. And we should do all this within the context of a determination to hold down the costs of health care, still the biggest problem for most Americans. We can do this without a tax increase and while working to bring the deficit down. We have been working very hard on this. The numbers clearly make that apparent.

The second issue I want to raise on our unfinished agenda is the minimum wage. The minimum wage is the key, first, to welfare reform. Unless work pays, why will people do it? There is some evidence that not only will the minimum wage increase I proposed not cost jobs, it might actually increase employment by drawing people into the ranks of the employed who are hanging out now. Not only that, working people simply cannot live and raise kids on $8,500 a year.

Now, the Republicans want—and they've wanted for a long time—they want to index tax rates against inflation, which has now been done. Now they want to index capital gains against inflation. They want to guard the defense budget against inflation. But they're willing to let minimum wage workers fall to their lowest real incomes in 40 years? That's what will happen if we don't raise the minimum wage. The lowest real incomes in 40 years, is that your idea of the legacy for working people in the aftermath of the cold war, in the information age, leading America into a bright, new time?

The minimum wage, again, has always before been a bipartisan issue. The last time we raised the minimum wage, it got an enormous vote in the Congress from Republicans and Democrats. Let's make the minimum wage a bipartisan issue again and raise it to a decent level, so that working people and their children will not have to worry about being punished for doing the right thing.

The last issue I want to talk about is education and training. I've already said most of what I want to say about it. The Secretary of Education is here with me today, along with many other people in the White House, my Chief of Staff, Mr. Panetta, and others. We've all worked very hard on education. Why? Because I believe that the most important job of Government today is to give people the tools they need to succeed in the global economy.

With all these changes that are going on, everybody knows the Government can't guarantee everybody a job. We haven't been able to do it in a long time, and our ability to guarantee the same job for a career is less than ever before. I can work to create healthy conditions in which large numbers of jobs will be created, but guaranteeing a particular job to a particular person for a lifetime, it is out. It's not possible.

The only thing we can do is to make sure that for a whole lifetime people will always be able to get the skills they need, beginning at the earliest possible time with good education. That means that as we cut the deficit and cut the budget, we must not cut education. We shouldn't cut Head Start. We shouldn't cut aid to public schools to meet national standards of excellence. We shouldn't cut apprenticeships to help young people who don't go on to college get good training so they can get a job with a growing income, not a shrinking income.

We sure shouldn't cut and make more expensive the college loan program when we need more people going to college and the cost of going is higher than ever before. And we should not cut our national service program, AmeriCorps, which lets people earn college money through community service. Cutting education in the face of global economic competition, as I have said repeatedly, would be just like cutting the defense budget at the height of the cold war. It undermines our security as a people, and we shouldn't do it.

I advocated in the middle class bill of rights a deduction for the cost of all education after high school; the ability to withdraw tax-free from an IRA to pay for the cost of education after high school; and a "GI bill" for America's workers that would collapse literally dozens of these Federal programs that are here, there, and yonder in job training into one block grant, and not give it to the States, give it to the people. Let Americans who are unemployed or grossly unemployed have a voucher for cash money which they can use at any education or training facility of their choice as long as it's decent and meets good standards, so that we can have

a continuous, seamless web of lifetime of education and training opportunities for the people of the United States.

Well, there it is. That's what I'm for and what I'm against. I do not want a pile of vetoes. I want a pile of bills that will move this country into the future. I don't want to see a big fight between the Republicans and the Democrats. I want us to surprise everybody in America by rolling up our sleeves and joining hands and working together. I believe this is a time of such profound change that we need a dynamic center that is not in the middle of what is left and right but is way beyond it. That's what I want, and that's what I'm working for.

If you want to know how I'm going to make other decisions—if I left one out—I would refer you to what I said in my address to the Nation on December 15th. My test is: Does an idea expand middle class incomes and opportunities? Does it promote values like family, work, responsibility, and community? Does it strengthen the hand of America's working families in a global economy? If it does, I'll be for it, no matter who proposes it. And if it doesn't, I will oppose it.

The future I want for America is like the one I imagined I had when I was the age of these children that are here in this audience. We can give this to our children. In fact, we can give a bigger future to our children. I am absolutely convinced that if we are tough enough and wise enough and unpolitical enough to put the interests of ordinary Americans first, and to really focus on the future, that our best days are before us, better than we can even imagine. But it all depends on what we do at this crossroads. Let's get busy.

Thank you very much.

[*At this point, the President took questions from newspaper editors.*]

Newspaper Role in Community Dialog

Q. Mr. President, you talk about a civilized conversation in this country leading towards a new common ground. How would you challenge American newspapers to forward that conversation, doing things that we aren't doing now?

The President. Well, I don't know what each of you are doing or not doing now. But I will give you some examples. I'll give you three examples. I think you should try to replicate in your communities the kind of conversation that Newsweek reprinted based on questions they asked Speaker Gingrich and me about what the role of Government is and what it should be. I don't think that we—I think both of us are a little bit frustrated about it, because we didn't know—we just answered questions, and then they had to turn it into an article, but it was the beginning of an interesting conversation about what the role of Government ought to be.

The second thing I would advise is to take each one of these issues—I saw in the, I think it was in the Dallas Morning News, one of the papers today I saw, that I read had a portrait of a family on welfare. Take each of these big issues and try to figure out how to go from rhetoric to reality so that people can understand what all these labels mean. Because if all you hear about these debates is what sort of pierces through in 10 or 15 seconds on the evening news, chances are your opinion will be more dominated by the rhetoric. And if it happens to comport with the facts, that's fine, but if it doesn't, that's not so good. Newspapers can do that. Newspapers can analyze in depth real, hard evidence on various problems.

And the third thing I think maybe you ought to consider doing is sponsoring conversations within your community of people of different political and racial and other stripes—just people who are different. Because we are running the risk—interestingly enough, we have more information than ever before, but the way we get it may divide us from one another instead of unite us.

And I think it might be really interesting if all the newspapers in the country sponsored community discussions. I don't mean bring people like me or people who want to be President, or even maybe people from Congress in from outside, but I mean the people in your local community who would represent different political points of view and live in different neighborhoods and are from different racial backgrounds and have an agenda of common topics that are being discussed all around the country, and let people listen to each other and talk to each other.

My experience has always been that the differences among us, except on a few issues, are not nearly as profound as we think they are. And then report that to your readers, because we have to establish some sense of common ground. If all of our public discourse is about

segmenting the electorate and then trying to make sure that by election day you've got the biggest segment, and there's never an opportunity to redefine where we are in common, that may work okay in a stable time because the policies are more or less set, the direction is more or less set; nobody's going to veer too much one way or the other anyway. But in a time of real profound change where the information revolution has made all of us actors, it is important that we try to establish more common ground. So those would be my three suggestions.

V–J Day 50th Anniversary

Q. Mr. President, we're coming upon the ceremonies to commemorate the 50th anniversary of V–J Day. And someone suggested that it's time to try to heal the wounds of that war, and that the United States should take the first step by apologizing for dropping a bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Should we apologize? And did President Harry Truman make the right decision in dropping the bomb?

The President. No. And based on the facts he had before him, yes.

Cuban Refugees

Q. Mr. President, last week you went to Haiti, where the military operation of our troops and other nations really helped restore order and to stop the refugees from coming to our State and to our country. Several miles away, there are several thousand Cubans trying to flee that oppressive regime who are now being detained indefinitely in Guantanamo. What's the way out for our policy and for those Cubans?

The President. First, we are doing our best to deal with the situation at Guantanamo, which is a very difficult one, for reasons because of where you're from you understand as well as I do. We have moved quickly, or as quickly as we could to review the cases of the children and the elderly people who are there, and we have moved quite a lot of people into the United States. We are now having detailed discussions about what we should do about the remainder of the people who are there at Guantanamo. Meanwhile, we've done what we could to make their conditions as livable, as bearable as possible.

As to our policy, even though I recognize most countries disagree with it, I think being firm has been the proper policy. And I do not believe we should change it except within the confines of the Cuban Democracy Act. I would remind everyone here who's interested in this that the Cuban Democracy Act, while it stiffened sanctions against Cuba, also for the first time explicitly laid out in legislative language the conditions under which the United States might change various actions toward Cuba in return for actions by the Cubans.

Let me give you just one example. We have established, for the first time, direct phone service into Cuba. And the lines are quite jammed, as I understand it. It's cut the cost of calling home and calling relatives for Cuban-Americans. And it's enabled the Cuban Government to earn some money, because in all direct telephone conversations internationally, countries—at least, many countries—put a fee on such conversations. We did that because we thought it was the appropriate thing to do given the state of our relations and because of some things that had changed. Cuba is now establishing a more genuine farmers market that shows some movement in that area.

But the Cuban Democracy Act gives us a framework for future movement, and I—and also a firmness in our policy. And I think we should stay with both, both the firmness and the framework of the act.

Multiracial Families

Q. We have heard from several people here that there ought to be a multiracial box on the U.S. census forms so that people with parents of two races wouldn't have to deny one of them. What do you think should happen here?

The President. I wouldn't be opposed to that. That's the first time I ever heard it, but it makes sense. It's interesting that you raised that because of a related debate that's going on in Washington today, which is whether we should pass a Federal law which makes it clear that we should not discriminate against parents of one race in their attempts to adopt a child of another race. And I personally strongly support that position. And we've been trying to work through it to make—I though we had adopted that position last year at the end of the year. We did in large measure. We're talking about whether we need any other legal changes to achieve that.

But I—we are clearly going to have more and more multiracial, multiethnic children and families in this country. You're the first person

who ever asked me that question. But I think it ought to be done. I can't see any reason not to do it.

Telecommunications Legislation

Q. One of the issues we've been examining at this convention, Mr. President, is the new information age and our own role in it. And one of the issues that's likely to come up in the next 100 days to which you referred is a broad reform of telecommunications policy. Do you think that a pragmatic, practical compromise solution in this area, which affects how people get their dial tones and what is on the dial tone, is likely to come out of these discussions?

The President. I do. I think it is likely. Let me say that I very much wanted to pass a telecommunications act in the last session of Congress. And we came within a hair's breadth of being able to do it. Some rather—to me anyway—rather minor problems hung it up in the Senate. And as you know, it's not difficult to hang a bill up in the Senate. And so it got hung. If we can pass the right kind of telecommunications act, it can be good for American consumers and it can pump billions of more dollars into this economy and create a very large number of jobs.

It's interesting that you would ask me this. The Vice President and I had lunch yesterday, our weekly lunch, and we talked about this for quite some time. My concern about the bill in its present form in the Senate is that I believe, as written, it would lead to a rather rapid increase and a rather substantial increase in both telephone and cable rates in ways that I do not believe are necessary to get the benefits that the telecommunications bill seeks to achieve. So I would like to see some provisions in there which deal with that.

I can also tell you that the Antitrust Division of the Justice Department has some fairly serious reservations about how far it goes. Now I have in several areas been willing to see, because of the globalization of the economy, some modifications in our antitrust laws. But I'm concerned—and I think they're warranted. But I think that this may go too far. But the most important concern I have is, are we going to have a very large and unnecessary increase in cable and phone rates immediately if the bill, as passed, is adopted? That is my major concern. But I think we can get one, and we certainly need to get one.

First Lady's Role

Q. Mr. President, yesterday on the front page of the New York Times was this headline, "Hillary Clinton a Traditional First Lady Now." Could you tell us, was there a point where you sat down with the First Lady to discuss her role for the remainder of your term? [*Laughter*]

The President. No.

Q. And if so, what was the content of that discussion and what prompted it? [*Laughter*]

The President. I was trying to think of something really funny to say, but it would be a polite way of saying I don't discuss my private conversations with my wife. [*Laughter*]

Actually, while I was very pleased with the First Lady's trip and with the way my wife and daughter were treated and what they learned, and very, very pleased with the coverage, I don't really agree with that. I mean, I think that I very much wanted her to go to India, to Pakistan, to Bangladesh, Nepal, to Sri Lanka because that part of the world is a very important part of the world to us. And for various reasons, we have not been as closely involved, even with the democracies there, as we might have been, largely as a legacy of the cold war.

But one of the biggest obstacles to the modernization of those countries and to the vitality and preservation of democracy are the challenges faced by women and children there. I did not consider the trip either too traditional or unimportant. I thought what they were doing—what Hillary was doing was profoundly important. And after getting a blow-by-blow description of the trip for a good long while yesterday from both my wife and daughter, I still feel that way.

So I—when my wife was an unconventional First Lady of Arkansas and working full-time and, as she told that lady in the Bangladesh village, making more money than her husband—[*laughter*]—still her first concern was always for the welfare of mothers, children, and families. She founded an organization called the Advocates for Families and Children in our State. She was on the board of the Children's Hospital. We built an intensive care nursery there, the first time the State had ever been involved. This is a 25-year concern of hers, and I wouldn't over-read the significance of it.

I also wouldn't underestimate the significance of having a First Lady who can galvanize a glob-

al discussion about the role of women and young girls on our planet and for our future.

Electronic Information Regulation

Q. You alluded to our being in the information age. Many of us in this room are investigating and developing ways of disseminating information electronically. There are thousands outside this room who are doing the same. What role, if any, does the Federal Government have in censoring or regulating that information and news?

The President. Let me begin by saying I support what you're doing, and I've tried to bring the White House up to date electronically. You know, we have a pretty sophisticated E-mail operation. And now you can take a tour of the White House and all the Federal agencies on the Internet and find out more than you ever wanted to know. So we're trying to be there for you in virtual reality land.

I guess you're asking me about the bill that Senator Exon introduced on trying to regulate obscenity through the E-mail system, or through the electronic superhighway. To be perfectly honest with you, I have not read the bill. I am not familiar with its contents, and I don't know what I think. I do believe—about this specific bill. [*Laughter*] I'll tell you what I think about the issue.

I believe that insofar as that Governments have the legal right to regulate obscenity that has not been classified as speech under the First Amendment, and insofar as the American public widely supports, for example, limiting access of children to pornographic magazines, I think it is folly to think that we should sit idly by when a child who is a computer whiz may be exposed to things on that computer which in some ways are more powerful, more raw, and more inappropriate than those things from which we protect them when they walk in a 7-Eleven.

So as a matter of principle, I am not opposed to it. I just can't comment on the details of the bill, because I do not know enough about it. And I do not believe in any way shape or form that we should be able to do on E-mail, or through the electronic superhighway, in terms of Government regulation of speech, anything beyond what we could elsewhere. I think the First Amendment has to be uniform in its application.

So I'm not calling for a dilution of the First Amendment. But if you just imagine, those of us who have children and who think about this, you just think about what's the difference in going in the 7-Eleven and hooking up to the computer. I think that we have to find some resolution of this. And within the Supreme Court's standards, which are very strict, I am not philosophically opposed to some action.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at the Loews Anatole Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gregory Favre, outgoing president, Robert J. Haiman, board of directors, and William B. Ketter, incoming president, American Society of Newspaper Editors; Gov. William F. Weld of Massachusetts; and Gov. Stephen Merrill of New Hampshire.

Remarks to AmeriCorps Volunteers in Dallas
April 7, 1995

Thank you. Let's give Alexis another hand. [*Applause*] Was she great, or what? I don't think there is much more for me to say. [*Laughter*] She said it all, and she said it well. Congratulations. Thank you for your example. I want to say, also, a special word of welcome and thanks to your Congresswoman, Eddie Bernice Johnson. We have been friends now for over 20 years. And I'm sure that when we first met, well, I thought she might be in Congress some day, but I'm sure she never thought I'd be President. [*Laughter*] I want to thank all your—the local leaders for being here. We have people from the city council and from the county commission and from the State legislature. And we have Mrs. Rouse, who's on the State commission for AmeriCorps.

And Texas has been so supportive of AmeriCorps. The Dallas Youth Service Corps is doing a great job here with the Greater Dallas Community Services Community of Churches and other AmeriCorps programs. But I want