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Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in Gaston Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Father Leo J. O'Donovan, president, Georgetown University; Molly M. Raiser, Chief of Protocol, Department of State; Gov. Frank Keating of Oklahoma; and Mayor Ronald Norick of Oklahoma City, OK.

## Remarks to the National Education Association
*July 6, 1995*

I want to thank you for your kind introduction and even more for your many years of distinguished leadership for our children, our schools, our parents, and of course, for our teachers. And to all of you delegates, I want to thank you for the support you have given to our administration to help us to get here and to help us honor our commitments to the children, the teachers, and the future of America.

I also want to thank you for the high honor you paid my good friend Secretary Riley by naming him your 1995 Friend of Education. I don't have to tell you that education has no better friend than Secretary Riley. I'm proud to have him in my Cabinet, and I'm proud to have worked with him for nearly 20 years now. He's actually doing what others say we ought to be doing. He's supporting more parental involvement. He's supporting higher standards and results-oriented programs. He's supporting accountability, but he's also supporting grassroots empowerment for teachers, for parents, and for local schools throughout this country. He is really making a difference, and he deserves the support of all Americans and all Members of Congress, without regard for their party.

You know, of course, that the Vice President very much wanted to be with you today. But of course, his mother fell ill and had to have surgery yesterday. I'm happy to report to you that as of this morning Mrs. Gore is doing much better. She is a remarkable woman. Many years ago she was the first woman lawyer in Texarkana, Arkansas, so I've always thought we've sort of had a claim on her, too. I know all of you join Hillary and me in praying for Mrs. Gore and her speedy recovery, and for her husband, Senator Gore, and for Al and Tipper and their entire family.

I'd like to begin this morning by just taking a few minutes to talk about what I said when I spoke at Georgetown University a couple of hours ago. It's something I believe I should be talking about more as President.

When I ran for this office, I said I wanted to do two things: first of all, to restore the American dream and, secondly, to bring the American people together again. What I've learned from the journey we've been on for the last 2½ years is that we cannot restore the American dream unless we do bring the American people together again.

You and I and all Americans must talk about how we treat one another, how we reach the hard decisions we have to make during this time of profound change, how we bridge these great divides in our society. We have got to find a way to reach common ground, a new common ground that honors our diversity but recognizes our shared values and shared interests, drawing strength from both to make the very best of what we can do in America. We have to recognize that there are real reasons why Americans feel that our sense of unity and national purpose is coming apart, why they often feel frustration and anger and confusion.

The challenges of this day are new and profound, as profound as any we have faced in many, many decades. For most people my age and a little younger, two great certainties organized our lives. They've organized the lives of Americans for most of the last half-century: first, the hope of middle class dreams and, second, the strength of middle class values.

Today, more and more Americans are less certain of both. The middle class dream that work will be rewarded and that the future for our children will be better is fading for too many people. More than half of all of our people are working harder to earn less than they did 15 or 20 years ago. And middle class values, the values of hard work, strong families, safe

streets, secure future, those things are under attack, too, as we face threats from violence, the breakdown of families, the fraying of our social fabric, the very pace and scope of changes in this technological information age, where ideas and money and information move across the globe in a fraction of a second.

The question, of course, is what are we going to do about this. That's what I've been working on for 2 years, and that's the fundamental debate now going on in Washington. And we need to have that debate not just here in Washington but all over the country.

We're really back to some pretty elemental principles. Some people argue that our real problems are all social and personal and cultural problems. So they say if everybody would just get up, go to work, behave themselves, obey the law, all of our problems would be solved. Now, on one level they're obviously right. Our problems can never be solved through purely political and community means. I've said all along, we've got to demand more responsibility from America, from all Americans. Unless people are willing to take responsibility for themselves, as every teacher knows, you can't cram information, learning, reasoning, compassion, or good citizenship into the head of someone who won't be open to it.

But at the same time, let's be completely frank. It's also true that nobody in America, no one, especially me, got where he or she is today alone. To believe otherwise is foolish. We all have to play a role, individual citizens in their daily lives, people doing their part to help make their communities stronger, their neighbors safer, politicians in the way they deal with and address our problems. We've all got to do a better job. And I believe we have to recognize that one of the ways we all do more together is through the way our Government works and what it does to help our people meet the demands of change.

This is not an either/or thing. This is not "Are these problems personal and cultural, on the one hand, or social and political, on the other?" That's not the way the world works. It's both. And there is a role, a partnership role, for the Government to help you do what you do and to help all Americans make the most of their own lives.

Education is perhaps the best example of this. It's the work of your lives, but it's also the work of America's future. All of these concerns come together in education because school is where young people can learn the skills they need to pursue middle class dreams, especially now when knowledge is more important than ever to our future. School is also the place where middle class values taught by parents are reinforced by teachers, values like responsibility, honesty, trustworthiness, hard work, caring for one another and our natural environment, and good citizenship.

Government plays an indispensable role in helping to make sure that the schools that you work in are as strong as possible, have the highest standards possible, provide as much opportunity as possible. The dynamic is pretty simple. A good education clearly is key to unlocking the promise of today's economy in the 21st century. Without it, people are at an ever-increasing risk of falling behind.

Today, a male college graduate earns 80 percent more than a male who's just graduated from high school. That gap is double what it was just in 1979. That's why I have been fighting furiously since the day I took office to expand educational opportunity, to give all Americans a chance to grab the key to a prosperous future. As you know well, we have dramatically expanded Head Start. We passed Goals 2000 to set world-class standards for our schools and then to give grassroots reform power to empower, really empower teachers and principals and parents, to give them the flexibility to decide how to meet those standards and how to improve education.

Our national service program, AmeriCorps, gives a helping hand with college for 20,000 people who are helping their country in grassroots programs all across America. The safe and drug-free schools initiative is helping to make schools safe, places where kids can learn again and be free from fear, places where parents can trust their children to be free from crime and drugs. Our direct student loan program makes college more affordable for millions of Americans while actually cutting the cost for taxpayers.

Now, there is one piece of this that is especially important for us to talk about today. As I noted before, you've just honored Dick Riley. I want to commend him for so many things, but in particular for the work the Education Department is doing to teach our children good citizenship and the values we need to stay strong. There is something that we need to re-

member about that Department of Education that Dick Riley is now heading and heading in the right direction.

Just 18 years ago yesterday, on July 5, 1977, two sons of Minnesota, Vice President Mondale and former Vice President Hubert Humphrey, shared the same stage at another NEA convention. Now, back in 1977, you all know that education policy in America fell under the giant umbrella of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, a huge bureaucratic agency responsible for health care policy and welfare responsibility and all the educational responsibilities, whether it was keeping our classrooms up to date, ensuring our public schools had the tools they need to teach our children, maintaining high curriculum standards, giving special-needs schools and special-needs students the support they need. All those things were all lumped into this massive bureaucracy that was Health, Education, and Welfare.

That wasn't in the best interest of public education then. It's certainly not in the best interest of the country today when education is literally the key to our economic future, to restoring middle class dreams, and it's certainly critical to reestablishing the dominance of middle class values.

At that historic meeting, Vice President Humphrey made a passionate plea, and he was a very passionate man, for something the NEA had been fighting for for over 100 years, a Cabinet-level Department of Education. America's children would have only 2 more years to wait. The bill creating the Cabinet-level Department of Education was signed by President Carter in October 1979.

In the last 2½ years, Secretary Riley, a former Governor who labored for 8 years to dramatically improve schools in his native South Carolina, has worked hard to make the Department of Education work better than ever. We need the Department of Education today more than ever before. And we need it even more because Dick Riley has literally reinvented it. It is less bureaucratic. It is smaller. Programs have been consolidated. But he is focusing on the big issues, whether it is the preschool needs of our kids, the standards and the grassroots reform we need in public schools, the need we have for school-to-work transition programs in every State in the country, the need we have for expanded and lower cost and better repayment college loans, or the need he has to cooperate with the Department of Education to give our working people the right to get the training they need the minute they become unemployed because now so many of them will have to find new jobs with higher skills. That is the record of Dick Riley; that is the record of the Department of Education; and that is why we need it.

As all of you know, during this time when we have increased our investments in education, we have also cut the deficit 3 years in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was President. We're cutting it by more than a trillion dollars over 7 years. We're also cutting the bureaucracy of the National Government over a 6-year period by more than 272,000 positions to make the Federal Government the smallest it's been since President Kennedy was President.

Let me tell you just how dramatic the changes have already been in 2½ years. The Government is already 150,000 people smaller. We have eliminated thousands and thousands of regulations, including regulations in the Department of Education. We have eliminated hundreds of Government programs. And the budget would be balanced today but for the interest we have to pay on just the debt run up the 12 years before I became President.

But we can't stop there. We must continue to cut the deficit until we eliminate it completely and balance the budget. That is why I have proposed a plan to balance the budget in 10 years. While cutting spending to balance the budget, however, under my plan we would continue to invest in our people, especially in education.

We must not sacrifice the future of our children in our zeal to save it. But let me also say to you that I know a lot of people who want to invest more money in our country question whether we actually need a balanced budget. They questioned my wisdom when I proposed a balanced budget. But let me ask you to look at the history of America.

We ran deficits all during the 1970's, but we did it for good economic reasons. That was a period of stagflation, of low growth, a period when it was legitimate to stimulate the economy in a modest way by modest deficits. We never, I reemphasize, never in the history of our Republic had a permanent structural deficit until 1981. After that, a lot of the people who got the tax cuts spent them and there was no way to reach a bipartisan consensus to lower the

gap in the deficit. So we quadrupled the debt of this country in 12 years. We're 219 years old, and we've quadrupled the debt in 12 years. Now, we have to change that.

Look what's happened to you. Every year in the 1980's, you had to fight to hold on to the educational advances. Every year when you knew that we needed to be investing more because many parents were able to invest less in terms of money and time in their children's education, you were often disappointed because we were spending more and more and more in interest on the debt.

Next year, interest on the debt will exceed the defense budget. That's how big a problem it is. It makes us poorer. It takes our savings. It makes us more dependent on other economies. And it leaves us less money to invest in education, in infrastructure, in technology, in the things that will grow jobs, raise incomes, increase the middle class, and shrink the under class.

So what we have to do is to balance the budget and increase investment in education. That's why I made the decision to veto the rescission bill that Congress sent me earlier last month. But it's also why I gave them an alternative. I am determined to work with the new Congress to cut the deficit and ultimately to balance the budget. But that rescission bill cut investments in our future, in education, in job training, in the environment, just to fund things that have a far lower value, even though they may be popular in the short term with specific constituencies.

Now that Congress has agreed to restore funding for those investments, I'll be happy to sign a bill. It will cut the deficit, and that's good. But we'll also have $733 million in this year alone in critical investments, including $220 million for safe and drug-free schools, $60 million to help train teachers and pay for education reforms at the grassroots level, $105 million for AmeriCorps.

As we work in the coming months to balance the budget, we have to do it in the same way. You and I know it would be self-defeating to cut our investments in education. Cutting education today would be like cutting defense budgets at the height of the cold war. Our national security depends upon our ability to educate better, not just to spend more money but to reach more people, to perform at a higher level, to get real results. That's what our security depends upon.

But don't kid yourselves, we've got a real fight on our hands. The congressional budget, which balances the budget in 7 years, cuts education severely, as Keith Geiger just said. My budget, which balances the budget in 10 years, increases education while cutting other spending.

We're also able to go easier on Medicare and Medicaid, to take some real time and promote real health care reform, and to continue to invest in new technologies and research. All we have to do is take 3 more years and cut the size of that big tax cut roughly in half, maybe a little more.

Now, I think 3 years is a pretty small price to pay to save millions and millions of dreams. Let me just give you a few examples of the difference 3 years will make. I want to increase Goals 2000 to about $900 million so that you will be able to work to improve 85,000 schools serving 44 million students. The congressional budget would eliminate Goals 2000, one of the principal engines of grassroots reform, something they say they support.

I want to increase Title I by over $200 million in 1996 to serve 200,000 more children that year. Let me just say something about Title I and your efforts. All the time up here I hear the politicians saying we just throw money at education, and it doesn't get any results, and we spend more money and we don't show more results. Well, as the Secretary of Labor has pointed out, there are public investments in children and private investments in children. We pretty well kept up with our public investments, but our private investments aren't keeping up. More and more of these children are being born in poverty, a higher percentage of them into difficult family circumstances and difficult neighborhood circumstances. And even those who have working parents have parents most of whom are working longer hours for less money. That means that parents have less money and less time to invest in our kids. That's a much bigger burden for you to bear.

Now, the Congress wants to freeze funding and deprive over one million children of the help that you can provide by 2002. I believe the money will make a difference because I know that you can make a difference. You can't make all the difference for what doesn't happen in the family, but you ought to get a lot of

credit for trying and for the difference that you do make.

I want to increase the school-to-work program by 60 percent next year so 43 States can help thousands of students learn the skills they need to get and keep high-paying jobs, even when they don't go on to 4-year universities. We're the only major industrialized country that does not have a system for dealing with all of the high school graduates who don't go on to 4-year schools. Now, the Congress wants to cut it to half that amount. I think that's being penny-wise and pound-foolish.

I want to expand AmeriCorps to 50,000 people next year. Congress has proposed to eliminate it completely. I know that's a big mistake. Those 20,000 young people that are out there now, working with each other across the lines of race and region and religion and income are revolutionizing America at the grassroots level, solving problems, serving their communities, being good citizens, doing things that other people just give talks about, and earning money to pay for their education. We ought to keep national service, and we ought to expand it.

We've reformed the college loan system to make college more affordable for up to 20 million Americans. Secretary Riley has done a masterful job, along with his staff, in administering the direct loan program, which actually increases the availability of loans, lowers the cost to students, lowers the paperwork burden to colleges and universities, and cuts the cost to the taxpayers.

Now, the congressional majority wants to cut $10 billion from the student loan program by removing the interest subsidy during the time of the student's education, which will raise costs significantly for up to 7 million students. In the 1980's, the cost of a college education was the only thing that went up more rapidly than the cost of health care among the essential things that families need for the future. I don't think it's a very good idea to cut the college loan program. There are other ways to save the money.

Here's the bottom line. Under my plan, we balance the budget and increase educational investment by $40 billion in proven programs that work. The plan of the Republican majority in Congress balances the budget, but it cuts education by $36 billion, not counting the cuts in student loans.

Now, I'm not for a minute suggesting that balancing the budget is easy. Even under my plan, there will be plenty of pain to go around. We'll have to cut spending in other domestic programs about 20 percent across the board. But the difference between my plan and the congressional plan is the difference between necessary cutbacks and unnecessary, ultimately self-defeating pain. One distinguished business analysis has said that the Republican budget cuts so much so fast that it will actually increase unemployment and bring on a recession and, therefore, delay the time when they can balance the budget.

Now, we do have a responsibility to balance the budget. And I give them a lot of credit for proposing a balanced budget. But we've also got a responsibility to invest in our children and our future. We cannot restore the economy, we cannot rebuild the middle class, we can't recapture middle class dreams or reinforce middle class values if we walk away from our common responsibilities, the education of our people.

If we'll just take 10 years instead of 7, if we cut taxes for the middle class and focus on childrearing and education, and don't have big tax cuts for people who don't really need it because they're well-off and doing very well in this economy, then we can balance the budget and improve education. We can do both, and that's what I want you to fight for.

Our mission, your mission and mine, has got to be to build a bridge to the future that every American can cross. We have to give people the power they need to make the most of their own lives. That is what's behind this, balancing the budget and investing in education means building up America. And it's behind what I called for earlier today at Georgetown, a new common ground in which we come together to solve our problems.

I want our children's generation to inherit an America with as much opportunity as the one I was brought into. The best days of America should be, can be, will be before us if we work together. If people take the kind of responsibility you have taken to make our country better, we will do better. But it's going to take a good attitude. It's going to take good citizenship. It's going to take a willingness to listen to one another to find that common ground.

I have made a commitment that when I differ with the Republican Congress, I will offer an

alternative. I have made a commitment that I will have more conversation and less combat, like I did with my conversation with the Speaker up in New Hampshire. I have made a commitment to try to work for the long-term interests of our country, not just for the short-term gain. These are profoundly important things. And I have made a commitment not just to berate the worst in our country but to try to extol, extol the best—people like you that are doing things that work.

What you have to do is to be active and good citizens. Tell these Members of Congress that you will support cutting the deficit, you will support balancing the budget, but investing in our country and having the Federal Government play a role, which in the larger scheme of things is still a modest role but a critical one, is absolutely essential for our future.

You've been working hard out there, and a lot of you work under very difficult circumstances. But there is no more noble, no more important task, especially at this moment when we stand on the threshold of a new century.

I thank you for your service to your country. I thank you for your service to the children and to the future of America. I wish you well. I ask for your good wishes and your strength and your willingness to stand for what you know is right for America.

God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 2:20 p.m. from Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building to the National Education Association (NEA) convention meeting in Minneapolis, MN. In his remarks, he referred to Keith Geiger, NEA president.

## Telephone Conversation with Space Shuttle *Atlantis* Astronauts
*July 7, 1995*

*The President.* Hello? Captain Gibson?

*Commander Robert L. Gibson.* Hello, Mr. President. This is Captain Gibson. We're online.

*The President.* Welcome home, and congratulations. We are very proud of you.

*Commander Gibson.* [*Inaudible*]—Mr. President. It's a pleasure for us to be back, back on the ground again, and to have had the opportunity to take part in this flight.

*The President.* Well, the pictures were wonderful, and we all watched you with absolute fascination and incredible support and enthusiasm. This is truly the beginning of a new era of cooperation in space between the United States and Russia. We've built a new relationship between our two countries. We're doing things together. And I think that what you and your team and what the Russians did together symbolizes that more than anything that I could ever say. And I think because of your mission now, the United States and Russia, with our partners in Canada and Japan and Europe, are going to be able to meet the challenge of building the international space station. And I hope you and all of your team members will take an enormous amount of pride in that.

*Commander Gibson.* Well, thank you, Mr. President, for those extremely kind words. We certainly will. And I can tell you very honestly that at least all of us on the crew have a lot of very good friends in Russia and among the Russian Cosmonaut Corps and elsewhere in Russia. And I look forward very much to all of us continuing this.

*The President.* So do I. Before I sign off—I know you're tired and I know you're glad to be home—I want to offer a special congratulations to Norm Thagard on his record-breaking stay on orbit. We're all very proud of that. And I want to invite the entire crew to the White House as soon as you can come, because I want to hear some more about the mission and we need to talk about where we're going from here to keep the United States commitment to space exploration, travel, and to keep our whole program strong and alive.

*Astronaut Norman E. Thagard.* Mr. President, thanks for the words. This is Norm Thagard. The Russians took good care of me. We're great friends, so I think if what we did on a personal