

You know, most of us will do fine no matter what happens in terms of educating our children. But I believe we're going to do better if we pass our program to open the doors of college education to all Americans and let everybody have access to at least 2 years of education after high school and give everybody some sort of tax deduction for the cost of college tuition up to \$10,000 a year. I think we'll all be stronger if everybody gets a good education. That's what I believe.

So you have to decide that. But I believe we must remain an aggressive, forward-looking, reformist country committed to meeting these challenges and meeting these changes. And I know we can do it. I think you know we can do it.

That's the last thing I want to say. This election is not over. It has not even occurred yet, except among those of you who have voted absentee or if you live in one of those States

where they let you vote for 3 weeks. Otherwise all these polls are pictures of horseraces that aren't over. Now, I know there are no gamblers in this audience. [Laughter] But if there were people who had ever been to horseraces in this audience, chances are that several of them held winning tickets on horses that were ahead at the three-quarter turn. Some of them held tickets on horses that were ahead in the stretch. But the only tickets they collected on were the horses that were ahead at the finish line. The finish line is November 5th. And I want you to be there. I want you to bring people there. And I want you to help us build that bridge to the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:03 p.m. in the courtyard at the Biltmore Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to singer Peabo Bryson.

Remarks in Daytona Beach, Florida October 23, 1996

The President. Good morning, Daytona Beach, good morning! It is great to be here. Thank you very much for turning out in such large numbers, for your enthusiasm. We've got the Seminoles and the Gators together on something; that's great. Thank you. Congratulations on your great seasons.

Mayor Asher, I am delighted to be back in Daytona Beach, and I must say I thought it was beautiful when I was here 4 years ago. We spent the night, and we started out one of our bus trips here. But this beautiful downtown area is even more beautiful this year. Congratulations. I'm glad to be here.

I want to thank the people who appeared on the pre-program before we came: our congressional candidate, George Stuart; Ted Doran, Janet Bokum, Susanne Kosmas—Janet Bollum, let me say it right—and Susanne Kosmas, who are running for the legislature. I want to thank those who came with me here: Insurance Commissioner Bill Nelson and Attorney General Bob Butterworth. I want to thank your wonderful Congresswoman, Corrine Brown, one of the most energetic people that I have ever worked

with; your great Senator, Bob Graham, who served with me as Governor and is one of the most intelligent and gifted and far-sighted public servants I have ever worked with. Thank you, Bob Graham, for being here with me. And thank you, Governor Lawton Chiles, for so many things, but for proving that we can work together to make Florida and America a better place in so many ways. Thank you, sir, for your leadership.

I want to say more about the other two folks that are up here with me in a moment, but let me just say to Brian DeMarco, thank you, sir, for taking the time out of a different and busy career as a football player to stand up for the responsibility that all fathers have to pay child support for their children if they're not supporting them directly. You could be doing a lot of other things with your time, and you've set a great role model, a great example for America. And I thank you and the other athletes that are doing that.

And thank you, Ana Armstrong. Before I came out here I met with Ana and three other young women who are working and educating

themselves off of welfare so that they could succeed as parents and in the work force—Lizette Riveria, Karen Watson, and Joyce Meinert—along with Marcia Bush and Gerald Frisby, who work with them. And I want to talk more about them in a moment, but I just wanted to thank them for the work they have done.

I'd also like to thank the people who provided our music today: Time, the Mark Hobson Band, and the Bethune-Cookman College Gospel Choir and Concert Chorale; thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I came here to Florida less than 2 weeks from the election which will elect the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century. It is your choice. You have to decide whether we're going to build a bridge to the future or try to build a bridge to the past. You have to decide whether to tell the American people they have to get into that future on their own, or whether that bridge is going to be big enough and wide enough for all of us to walk across together. You have to decide whether we're going to say to folks, "You're on your own," or whether we're going to say, "Yes, it does take a village to raise our children and build our future."

Four years ago I came to Daytona Beach amid a time of high unemployment, rising frustration, and increasing division. Compared to 4 years ago we are better off, and we are on the right track to that 21st century. The unemployment rate in Florida has dropped to an 8-year low. We have 10½ million new jobs, a 15-year high in homeownership. We have declining crime rates for 4 years in a row and almost 2 million people fewer on welfare than there were when I took the oath of office. We are moving in the right direction.

Now it is for you to decide what path we will take to the 21st century. I want to ask all of you—there are a lot of young people in this audience today, and I thank you for coming. There are a lot of parents who brought their children here today and their grandchildren; I thank you for doing that. And I ask all of you when you go home tonight to take a little time in a quiet moment before you go to bed and see if you can answer this question: What do you want your country to look like when we start the 21st century, and what do you want your country to be like when your children are your age?

For me, it is a simple but profound issue, and it's a question as your President I deal with every day. I know what I want for America. I want us to start that new century with the American dream alive and well for every person responsible enough to work for it. I want us to keep leading the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I want us, amidst all our diversity, to be coming together, not to be torn apart. I want us to have families where people can succeed in raising their children and at work. I want us to live in harmony with our natural environment. And I want us to live in harmony with each other. I do not want America to be torn apart by the racial, the religious, the ethnic, the tribal hatreds that are consuming so much of the rest of the world. That is what I want for America.

Now, you'll have to decide what path you want to take. Your vote will decide whether we balance the budget while we protect our obligations to the future through education and the environment and protect our obligations to each other through Medicare and Medicaid, or whether we adopt a dangerous scheme that would increase the deficit, weaken the economy, and undermine the very values we seek to advance. Your vote will decide whether we build on the family and medical leave law and our efforts to protect our children from drugs and guns and gangs and tobacco, or turn back to a course that has failed in the past.

Your vote will decide whether we build on our efforts, so far successful, to tell people, "No more can you lose your health insurance because somebody in your family has been sick or because you've changed jobs. No more can a new mother and a newborn be kicked out of a hospital after 24 hours by an insurance company's office." Your vote will decide whether we continue to add people to the ranks of health insured, whether we continue to help people, as I propose, by helping people when they are unemployed to keep their health insurance for several months more, or whether we stop that.

Your vote will decide whether we continue to put 100,000 police on the street, continue to follow those strategies which have brought the crime rate down for 4 years in a row until we bring it down 4 more years and everybody feels safe on our streets, in our schools, in our neighborhoods again. Your vote will decide.

Your vote will decide whether we keep on cleaning up the environment. We have made

the air purer, our drinking water and food safer. We've cleaned up more toxic waste dumps than any administration before. We have moved to save the Florida Everglades and other national precious possessions. Your vote will decide whether we can continue to do that, or whether we will weaken our commitment to our common environment and our children's future.

Your vote will decide whether we can continue to advance the cause of education. Yesterday I was in south Florida at the Miami-Dade Community College, where I pointed out that we have just increased Pell grants by the largest amount in 20 years. We made 10 million American students eligible for lower cost college loans with better repayment terms so you can't go broke repaying your loans.

And your vote will decide which of two competing visions of education we adopt. My vision is an America in which every 8-year-old can read. We're going to mobilize a million volunteers to help people teach their children and to help teachers teach children to read so that every 8-year-old in America in the year 2000 can pick up a book and say, "I can read this all by myself."

Your vote will decide whether the United States, for the first time in history, helps desperately overcrowded schools in substandard conditions to build new facilities adequate to the 21st century. The United States has never helped school districts and States do this. My plan will lower the interest rates to save money for taxpayers if you make the efforts to meet the needs of your children. Your vote will decide whether we do that.

Your vote will decide whether we connect every classroom and every library and every school in America to that information superhighway, to the Internet, to the World Wide Web—to give all of our children access to it. And to those of you who, like me, didn't grow up in the computer age and may not understand what that means, let me tell you in plain language. If we can hook up every classroom with good computers, good educational materials, trained teachers, and access to the Internet, it means for the first time in the entire history of the United States, for the first time, every child in every school, public or private, rich, middle class, or poor, in every school, will for the first time have access to the same world of information in the same time at the same

level of quality. It will revolutionize opportunity in America. Your vote will decide.

Your vote will decide whether finally we take a step we should have taken long ago and open the doors of college education to every single American who is willing to work and go. Under my plan, Americans will be able to deduct from their tax bill, dollar for dollar, the cost of college tuition for the first 2 years of community college after high school. I want to make at least 2 years of education after high school as universal in 4 years as a high school diploma is today.

[At this point, an audience member required medical assistance.]

The President. We need my medical team over here. Hold up your hand, folks. I bring a doctor with me wherever I go. The medical team over here, right here in front. And one more in the back.

And let me just say this: I want to give a \$10,000 tax deduction per year for the cost of any kind of college tuition at any level, undergraduate or graduate. Your vote will decide. Your vote will decide.

Now, let me say your vote will also decide where we go on welfare reform. Weren't you proud of Ana Armstrong when she stood up here and talked about her future and what she's going to do? [Applause] Folks, most people I've met on welfare over the last 20 years—and I've met a lot of them—are like Ana Armstrong. They don't want to be on welfare, they want to work. And they want their children to be able to look up to them and say what they do for living. They want to have a good future. But we have been saddled for too long by a system that promotes dependence and undermines people's ability to live up to their dreams, instead of one that promotes independence.

I ran for office in 1992, and I told you here in Daytona that I would work to end welfare as we know it and to convert it to a system that promotes independence, good parenting, and successful work. And that's exactly what we're doing. We've moved almost 2 million people from welfare to work. In Florida alone the welfare rolls have dropped 25 percent in the last 4 years, thanks to the leadership of Governor Chiles and people like those with whom I met today.

Brian DeMarco wants people to pay their child support. We launched an unprecedented crackdown on child support. We have used

every resource available to the Federal Government. And today the National Government is releasing its statistics. Compared to 4 years ago, child support collections are 50 percent higher, almost 4 billion more dollars for the children of America—from their parents, not from the taxpayers.

And again, Florida has done even better. Child support collections in Florida are up over 60 percent over 4 years ago. Last month, Governor Chiles announced a program with the Miami Dolphins, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and the Jacksonville Jaguars called Don't Drop the Ball. Brian DeMarco is saying simply to the fathers of this country, "If you don't live with your children, you still ought to help support them. Don't drop the ball." We're going to keep going until we raise child support more and more and more. We will move hundreds of thousands of people off welfare by making sure that the parents do what they ought to do, take responsibility for their children and their future. Thank you, Brian DeMarco. Thank you, Governor Chiles. Thank you, Florida.

Now, I signed a new welfare reform bill, and here is what it says. It says the National Government will continue to guarantee to poor families health care and food for the children and, if they go to work, more for child care than ever. But within 2 years people must move to turn that welfare check into a paycheck. Florida was one of the first three States—one of the first three—to be approved by the National Government to go forward with welfare reform.

Now, you have to decide, what are we going to do? It's fine to tell people they have to go to work, but there has to be work there for

them and education and training. The jobs have got to be there. If you want more stories like Ana Armstrong, we have a plan, not rhetoric but a plan, to work with the private sector, to work with States, to work with communities like Daytona Beach, all over America, to move at least one million more people from welfare to work in the next 4 years. Will you help us build that bridge to the future? [Applause]

So there it is. It's your choice. It's your decision. Your vote will decide, and whether you vote will decide. Don't let anybody in this community, don't let anyone you know anywhere in America believe that their vote doesn't make a difference. This is a different country than it was 4 years ago. Our country is stronger than it was 4 years ago. And 4 years from now, on the bills that we're—on that bridge we're all going to build together, we will go roaring into the 21st century with our best days ahead. Will you help us build that bridge? [Applause]

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. at Beach and Magnolia Streets. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Baron H. Asher of Daytona Beach; George Stuart, candidate for Florida's Seventh Congressional District; Ted Doran, Janet Bollum, and Susanne Kosmas, candidates for the Florida House of Representatives; Brian DeMarco, offensive guard, NFL Jacksonville Jaguars; Ana Armstrong, Lizette Riveria, Karen Watson, and Joyce Meinert, students, and Gerald Frisby, dean of adult education and training, Daytona Beach Community College; and Marcia Bush, program administrator, Florida Department of Children and Families.

Remarks at a Presidential Unity Fund Reception

October 23, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you for being here, and thank you for your enthusiasm. I was tired when I walked in, but I'm not tired anymore. [Laughter] You've given me a lot of energy. I see that—do you see that young man there patting on his father's head? That young girl? [Laughter] Dad, someday you may wish people couldn't tell the difference. [Laughter] That is the postcard for what this

election is all about, right there. That's the picture. That is the picture.

I want to—if I might, I'd like to join Senator Daschle in thanking my friend and our friend and America's friend Wynton Marsalis for his brilliant play here tonight and for—[inaudible]—thank you.

I thank Senator Chris Dodd, who gives a better stump speech than anyone, for declining to