

Do you understand what the choices are? Will you help us build a bridge wide enough and strong enough for all of us to go? [Applause]

We need you, Missouri. Thank you. God bless you. Bear down, 8 days. Thank you. Show them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. at city hall. In his remarks, he referred to Joan Kelly Horn, candidate for Missouri's Second Congressional District.

Remarks in Minneapolis, Minnesota October 28, 1996

The President. Hello, Minnesota! Thank you. Thank you. Wow! Thank you. Let me say, first of all, with 8 days to go in this election, to come out here and see this shining sea of enthusiastic, exuberant faces, believing in our country and believing in our future, I'd rather hear your cheers than my words any day. You have made this the event it is. Thank you, thank you.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here, Congressmen Martin Sabo and Bruce Vento and Bill Luther. I thank Attorney General Skip Humphrey, who has been the chair of my campaign, for all he has done, but especially for being one of the first leaders to stand up and say it is time to stop the tobacco companies from advertising, marketing tobacco to our children. Thank you, Skip Humphrey.

I thank your State party chair, Mark Andrew, for his leadership. I want to thank the Sounds of Blackness. They were wonderful. Thank you.

I know that Minnesota is a great sports town, and we have two of your greatest athletes today here. I want to recognize them. Kevin Garnett from the Timberwolves, stand up. Thank you. Thank you, Kevin. And one of the greatest baseball players in modern history, who just got his 3,000th hit this season with the Minnesota Twins, Paul Molitor. Paul, stand up. Thank you. They're here because they want to make sure you vote on election day. Are you going to do it?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I thank you, Mary Rieder, for being willing to run against what was done in the last Congress by Speaker Gingrich and Senator Dole, and for being willing to run for the people of Minnesota. Will you help Mary Rieder serve you in the Congress in Minnesota? [Applause] I want to say a little more about that in a minute.

And I want to thank Paul Wellstone. You know, over the last 22 years, since I first ran for public office as a very young man—I can remember when I was a young man—[laughter]—I have had the privilege to meet many people in public life, men and women of all backgrounds, races, all political philosophies. I have to say, even though it's not fashionable in the heat of a campaign, that most of the people I have met in both parties and from different philosophies loved our country, wanted to do the right thing, and were harder working and more honest than they ever got credit for. But if you were to ask me after 22 years, here on the verge of my last election, what is the most important characteristic a public official can have, day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out, I would say it's a good thing to be smart because there are complicated problems. It's a good thing if you're physically strong because it can be exhausting. And now more than ever you need a thick hide; that's a good thing. [Laughter] It's very important to have common sense, and it's important to be able to communicate what you feel to people so they can understand it. But the most important quality is the one that Paul Wellstone has in abundance, a great heart. It is most important to have a great heart.

You know, Hillary and I always love to come to Minnesota. I love being here. I thought about this State a lot over the years. Our daughter came here to summer camp to the Concordia Language Village for many years. So I had a chance to come here many times when I was completely anonymous, back when I still had a life. [Laughter] And I sort of conducted my own little sociological survey of this remarkable place. And I've noticed that Minnesotans are independent; they'll vote for Republicans, and they'll vote for Democrats. I've noticed that they

don't like name-calling very much and that, historically, they've been quite progressive. And I've noticed also what I think is the most important characteristic in terms of the decisions we make about our future, which is that, historically at least, across party lines, in this State you've had a very strong sense of community, a sense that we have to do some things by working together, a sense that, as somebody that I know and care a lot about once said, it does take a village to raise our children and build our future.

And 8 days from this election, most of what I guess we need is a lot of your enthusiasm and energy and the kind of thing I've already heard today. But I hope you will stop and think, too, just a minute. I hope tonight before you go to bed you'll do something that I do, I try to do every day. I hope you'll ask yourself a simple question: This is the last election for President of the 20th century, the first election of the 21st century; what do you want your country to look like when we start that great new era in 4 years? What do you want your country to be like when your children are your age?

For me, the answer is simple but profound: I want an America where the American dream of being able to live out your dreams is alive and well for every citizen who is responsible enough to work for it. I want an America that is still leading the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I want an America where, unlike so much of the rest of the world, we are coming together with our diversity, making ourselves stronger, where everybody has a place and a future in our America.

And that is the choice you face. For 4 years we have relentlessly pursued an aggressive strategy to create opportunity for all, to get more responsibility from all of our citizens, and to create an American community where everyone has a role to play and a place at the table. Four years ago when I came to Minnesota and the people supported Al Gore and Bill Clinton, you took us on faith; you couldn't have known. Well, now there is a record.

Today we have even more evidence that we're on the right track to the 21st century. Earlier today I announced the official figures for the deficit in 1996. When I took office, it was \$290 billion; this year, it is \$107 billion. My fellow Americans, 4 years ago I said if you gave us a chance we'd cut that deficit in half to get

interest rates down and get the economy going again. It's been cut by 63 percent in 4 years. If you adjust the dollars for inflation, we have the lowest deficit in 22 years. It is a smaller percentage of our income than that of any other advanced economy in the entire world. And I want to say a special word of thanks to one of the chief engineers of the economic plan of 1993 which made it possible, Congressman Martin Sabo of Minnesota. Thank you, sir.

Now, there's been a lot of name-calling in these races up here. But you need to know when we brought the deficit down there was not a single member of the other party who voted for it. They said it would wreck the economy. They said it would bring us a recession. They said it would increase interest rates. They said the deficit would not go down.

Well, Paul Wellstone said, "I think we ought to bring the deficit down and keep investing in the economy, keep investing in education, keep protecting the environment, keep protecting those who depend upon Medicare and Medicaid. But we still have to bring the deficit down." That was the conservative thing to do: to protect our future, to conserve our people and our resources, and get our house in order. Senator Paul Wellstone said yes, and they said no. Don't forget that at election time. Don't forget that at election time.

I was reading some of the clips about Minnesota, where the unemployment rate has dropped to 3.8 or 3.7 or 3.6 percent, and I hear now there is a big problem with labor shortages in some places. Listen, folks, compared to 4 years ago, that is a high-class problem. Let's have more problems like that, labor shortage problems.

We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment, inflation, and home mortgages in 28 years. We've had the biggest drop in income inequality among working people in 27 years, the biggest drop in child poverty in 20 years, all-time record rates of exports and the formation of new businesses. That is the record. That is the direction we're going in. Homeownership is at a 15-year high. We are moving in the right direction; we need to stay on this track all the way to the 21st century.

We made every small business in America eligible for a tax cut when they invest more in their business. We made it easier for people to take out pensions when they work for small businesses and move from job to job. We made

it easier for self-employed people to buy their own health insurance by giving them a bigger tax cut when they do so. We cut taxes for 15 million of the hardest pressed working people in America, and Paul Wellstone voted for that.

You should also know that we have reduced the welfare rolls by nearly 2 million starting in January of '93 through policies all of the folks in our party, including Senator Wellstone, supported—1.9 million fewer people on welfare, 1.9 million more people at work. The crime rate has gone down for 4 years in a row; it's at a 10-year low. Child support collections in America are up 50 percent compared to 4 years ago and almost 70 percent in Minnesota. We're moving in the right direction.

We raised the minimum wage for 10 million people. Twelve million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law that says you can have a little time off from work when a baby is born or a family member is sick. We are stronger because of that. Twenty-five million people now may be able to save their health insurance because we passed a law that says you can't have your insurance jerked just because you've moved from job to job or because someone in your family has been sick. And we passed another law that says mothers and their newborn babies cannot be forced out of the hospital within 24 hours. Thank you, Senator Wellstone. Thank you, Members of Congress.

Now, what you have to decide here in this election is not a matter of party. That's an unconventional thing for me to say with all my fellow Democrats up here and most of you presumably members of our party, but it is not. What you have to decide—what you have to decide is what vision, what ideas do you want to shape the direction our country takes as we go through this huge time of change. There is a dramatic change. You know it here in Minnesota. Here in the Twin Cities area you're on the cutting edge of so much change, but let me just tell you a couple of things to illustrate how much we're changing the way we work and live and relate to each other.

When I became President, there were 3 million people working at home on their computers, away from the office. Today there are over 12 million people doing that. Four years from now there will be 30 million people doing that. That will change everything in the way we work.

When I became President, most people thought HIV and AIDS was a death sentence. We have more than doubled the life expectancy of people with HIV and AIDS. We're on the verge of turning it into a chronic disease. The medical research we've invested in has given us the first treatment ever for strokes. Last year medical researchers in Government-funded research discovered two genes that cause breast cancer, and we may be able now not only to detect it early and avoid radical treatment but even to prevent it altogether. I announced 30 million more dollars for genetic research and breast cancer yesterday.

Many of you were moved when Christopher Reeve spoke at the Democratic Convention about the importance of medical research. And just about the time he spoke, for the first time ever a laboratory animal whose spine had been completely severed regained movement in its lower limbs by the transfer of nerves to the spine from other parts of the body. Think what that could mean. Think what that could mean—revolutionizing the potential of life in America. We are on the verge of an explosion of possibility, where more people than ever before will have a chance to live out their dreams. But you have to make the right decisions. Are we going to build a bridge to the future or a bridge to the past?

Audience members. The future!

The President. Is that bridge going to be big enough for all of us to walk across together?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are we going to tell some people, "You're on your own, have a good time," or are we going to say, "It does take a village"?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. That is the issue. When you see Mary Rieder up here talking, a person who has been a committed private citizen offering herself for Congress, you have to ask yourself, is this the vision I believe in, or was Speaker Gingrich right?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. This is not about party; this is about your life. They passed a budget which would have ended the guarantee of medical care to our poorest children, to our seniors in nursing homes, to families who can maintain middle class lifestyles and still care for family members with disabilities. They would have ended that. They would have given us the first real cuts in our education investments in modern history.

They would have paralyzed the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect the quality of our environment. They would have allowed employers to raid their employees' pension funds, even to raise their own pay, if that's what they wanted.

And when I vetoed that budget, they shut the Government down and said, "Oh, those Democrats, they love the Government so much they'll give us what we want just to get it open." And I said, "I'd a lot rather see you hurt people for 3 months than 30 years. No, thank you very much. We are going to stand up."

Now, these things have significance. This is not about the old-fashioned political debates: should this be done at the national and local level. This is really about how you think we're going forward into the future. That's what's at stake in Mary Rieder's race. And all these talks about, you know, liberal and conservative—let me just give you an example of some of the choices before us. This will happen; your vote will decide how this comes out.

Your vote in the Presidential race and in other races will decide whether now that we've cut the deficit from \$209 billion to \$107 billion, whether we go on and balance the budget and still protect Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment, and have targeted tax cuts that help people raise their children, have access to college, buy a first-time home, and pay for health insurance, all paid for already in our balanced budget plan; or whether we embrace this huge, \$550 billion tax scheme which raises taxes on 9 million of our hardest working people, will blow a hole in the deficit, raise your interest rates, raise the cost of student loans, car payments, house payments, and business loans, and require bigger cuts than the ones I vetoed. That's the decision. Forget about party; ask yourself, do you want that for your future?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Don't you think we ought to balance the budget and protect our values and our future?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. That's what Paul Wellstone voted to do, and that's what we'll do in the future. Your vote will decide. We passed the family and medical leave law. The leaders of the other party said it was a bad thing, it would hurt the economy. Twelve million families took advantage of it, and we have record numbers of new businesses. They were wrong.

Now, I want to expand the family leave law and say people ought to be able to get a little time off to go see their children's teacher twice a year and take their kids to regular doctor's appointments. And I believe when workers earn overtime—I'm going to tell you, everywhere I go, people tell me the biggest challenge they're facing in their lives if they're parents and workers is trying to balance the demand of being parents and workers. So I'd like to see us change the overtime law to give the worker the option when they run up overtime of taking the money for overtime or taking time with their children or sick parents or their sick spouses, if that's what they want to do. You will decide. You will decide.

You will decide whether we finish this work we are doing to stop the advertising, marketing, and sales, illegally, of tobacco to children. They are against it. Paul Wellstone is for it. You will decide in the Presidential race and in other races.

You will decide whether we continue to support the safe and drug-free schools program. Let me say this: There has been a lot of talk about the drug issue. This is a difficult thing for America now. We've had a big decline in drug use in America, a big decline overall, but drug use is still going up among people under 18. And we now know from surveys that somewhere around 1990 large numbers of young people decided it wasn't dangerous anymore, even though, if you take marijuana, all the medical studies now show that the toxicity of marijuana available today breaks up the concentration patterns of young people, can threaten the ability of young women to give birth to normal children, can undermine the whole future of people, not to mention what all the other drugs will do. It's a problem. We all have to do more.

We increased border patrols. We increased penalties on drug kingpins and others. And we put more people in the schools, early, to give the kids something to say yes to, those D.A.R.E. officers and others. They tried to cut the safe and drug-free schools program in half. That's their program for our kids—cut the safe and drug-free schools program in half. Paul Wellstone and I said, no thank you. We want more people out there trying to keep our kids out of trouble and giving them a future. And I think that's what you ought to support. I don't think it is conservative to want to cut the safe and drug-free schools program in half.

Look at the crime rate. The crime rate's gone down now for 4 years in a row. Is it still too high? You bet it is. But we know what works. All these folks up here in the Congress, they stood with me and helped me to pass the toughest crime bill in history. The leaders of the other party, they all fought it. And they went around and made a lot of hay in a lot of rural congressional districts, including in this part of our country, by telling people that "the President and his party, they're trying to take your guns away from you. That's what the Brady bill is all about; that's what the assault weapons ban is all about."

Well, they did that in '94, but now we know, we've got a record now. Two years later, not a single hunter in Minnesota has lost a rifle. But 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers did not get handguns because of the Brady bill. We were right, and they were wrong. They were wrong. And we just voted to extend the Brady bill to say if you beat up your spouse or your child, you can't get a gun either. And I think we were right again.

So now, when you think about the President or the Senator or Mary Rieder, you have to think about what's still out there. Let me tell you what's still out there. Are we going to finish the job of putting 100,000 police on the street, or shall we do it their way and walk away from it? Why would we abandon a strategy that is working, that is not only catching criminals but is preventing crime and giving our kids some role models in their neighborhoods and people to work with and something to say yes to? I think I know your answer. We need to build communities from the grassroots up, and we need to continue until we finish the job of putting these 100,000 police on the street and making all of our neighborhoods safe in America again. Will you help us? Will you help us? [Applause]

The same thing is true in the environment. We fought, we fought, we fought, and finally we prevailed. And so we have taken millions of tons of poisonous chemicals out of our air. We've lifted the quality of drinking water and the safety of our foods, and we've closed more toxic waste sites in 3 years than the previous administrations did in 12. And we saved the parks from an ill-advised attempt to sell off some of our national parks. But we have a lot to do. Ten million children still live within 4 miles of toxic waste sites. If you give us a chance

to move forward, we'll close 500 more and say our children are growing up next to parks, not poison. I want you to help us build that future. Will you do that? [Applause]

But let me say this: Far and away the most important distinction between us, and far and away the most important decision you have to make in terms of how we'll be living 20 or 30 years from now involves education. You've heard Mary talk about it. You heard Senator Wellstone talk about it. The truth is that even in a State like Minnesota, with a well-deserved reputation for having one of the finest educational systems in the world, we have to do better. We have to do better. The truth is that with our increasing diversity, 40 percent of our 8-year-olds still cannot read a book independently. And so I have proposed that we marshal 30,000 reading specialists and AmeriCorps volunteers and that we go out and ask for a million more volunteers. And let me say, in the budget I just signed we got 200,000 more positions in work-study for college students. And I want half of them to go to teaching kids to read because I know if we all work on it, by the year 2000 we can have a country where every 8-year-old in American can hold up a book and say, "I can read this all by myself." That's what I'm trying to get done.

And I want us to build an America in the year 2000 where every classroom and every library and every school is hooked up to the information superhighway, to the Internet, to the World Wide Web. What is the significance of that? Well, here in the Twin Cities there are a lot of you in this audience today that know more about computers now than I'll ever know. But I know this: There are still people in isolated inner cities and in remote rural areas that do not have the educational opportunities they need and deserve, and they are not learning as much as they should, and the rest of us will pay for it unless we do better. If we hook up every classroom and every library to the information superhighway, for the very first time in the history of the United States all of our children in the rich, the middle class, and the poor districts will have access to the same information in the same way in the same time. It will revolutionize education, and we can do it together. We can do it together.

And the last thing I would say to you is, we must open the doors of college education to every single American of any age who needs

to go. And in our balanced budget plan—in our balanced budget plan, paid for, every dime of it—are three proposals: One, more people can save in IRA's for years and years and then take the money out without any penalty if the money is being used to pay for a college education or health care or to buy a first home. Two, we want to make 2 years of education in a community college as universal in 4 years as a high school diploma is today. And here's how we're going to do it—no program, no bureaucracy—just simply to say we will give you a deduction, dollar for dollar. You can take, dollar for dollar, off your tax bill the cost of a typical community college tuition for 2 years if you will just go, make your grades, and do a good job. That will revolutionize opportunity in America. And finally, I believe we should offer a tax deduction every year of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of college tuition at any institution at any level. That will revolutionize American education.

Now, if we do these things, we will create an America in which everybody has a chance to live out their dreams. We will create an America that is still leading the world economically and politically and militarily for peace and prosperity and freedom.

And finally, and maybe most important, we have to commit ourselves not to falling prey to the demonic divisions that are hurting so many people elsewhere in the world. How much time have I spent as your President in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, sending troops to Rwanda to save hundreds of thousands of lives, where people are fighting all over the world because they're of different races, religions, tribes, creeds. How many people are there in the world who get up every day, and

the only way they can get through the day is to say, "Well, whatever you think about me, at least I'm not them." They look down on them.

How much hatred will we have to endure before we finally say, "Enough"? That is what I have worked for in Bosnia, what I worked for in Haiti, what we're working for in the Middle East at this very moment. In America, that is why I've fought those church burnings and the desecration of the synagogues and the Islamic centers. That is why.

Now, in Minnesota, I want you all to say this election is also about whether we're going to treat each other with respect, because I want to be able to say we're going to build this bridge, and it's going to walk across to the 21st century, to the era of greatest possibility ever known. And all I need to know about you is whether you believe in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and whether you're willing to show up and do your job tomorrow. If you are, I don't want to know anything else about you. You're part of my America.

Let's join hands and walk into a bright new future. Will you help us build that bridge? Will you help us? Will you be there on Tuesday? [Applause]

God bless you, Minnesota. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. at the Target Center. In his remarks, he referred to Hubert H. Humphrey III, Minnesota attorney general, and Mary Rieder, candidate for Minnesota's First Congressional District. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in Chicago, Illinois

October 28, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. It is always, always good to be back in Chicago. Senator Moseley-Braun, thank you so much. And Mr. Mayor, thank you for your strong support, your friendship, and your very moving history lesson about the times when your father was here with President Kennedy. Maybe

a week from tomorrow we can reclaim a lot of our great hopes and take them into the 21st century with pride and energy and vigor.

I want to thank Congressman Bobby Rush, Congresswoman Cardiss Collins, Congressman Bill Lipinski for being here. And I know that there are some other congressional candidates