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Thank you. Well, we were outside, and they played ''Ruffles and Flourishes,'' and we had a momentary delay when we tried to decide whether Mayor Brown or I should walk in first. [*Laughter*] We finally got it right, if you saw how—[*laughter*].

I am delighted to be here. I thank Mayor Daley for his warm introduction, fulfilling one of Clinton's laws of politics: Always be introduced by someone whose brother is in the Cabinet. [*Laughter*] I'm glad to be here with Secretary Cuomo, Secretary Herman. Senator Boxer, thank you for joining us this morning. Representative Lofgren I think is here. Mayor Brown, thanks for putting on such a good show. Thanks for giving me another reason to come to San Francisco. To all the mayors here on the stage and in the audience, especially to Mayor Helmke and Mayor Corradini, who are about to assume their respective offices.

I saw my good friend Mayor Rice, and he said that today is his wife's birthday, so happy birthday. There you are. Happy birthday. [*Applause*] Thank you. I know that Mayor and Mrs. Webb are here. They hosted us at the Summit of the Eight, and if they fall asleep during the speech, I give them advance permission because they've been up for 2 or 3 days. [*Laughter*] Denver did a great job.

Thank you, Tom Cochran, for the work you've done with us. I'd also like to just make a special note of my new Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House, who has been here with you, Mickey Ibarra, and Lynn Cutler, who has also been here. We're glad to have them working with you, and I know you'll enjoy working with them.

And I'd like to announce my intention to fill Secretary Cuomo's former job as Assistant Secretary of HUD for Community Planning with the mayor of Laredo, Texas, Saul Ramirez, who is right over here. Saul, stand up. [*Applause*] Thank you. Why anyone would be willing to leave Laredo to move to Washington is beyond me, but I'm glad he agreed.

I always look forward to this meeting because I do believe America's most creative and gifted and effective public officials today are to be found among the mayors. I've always thought of you as friends and allies in doing America's work, and I've always thought that a lot of my job was to help you do your jobs better.

I imagine I have been in more urban neighborhoods, meeting with more different kinds of people about more different kinds of issues than any of my predecessors. I've certainly tried to make that the case because when I ran for President, I knew that I needed to spend time in our cities, to get to know the people, the problems, and the promise of the cities, to connect our cities with our suburbs and make people understand that these problems we share are common problems and that the promise of America in this new century is a shared promise.

I also believed fervently, and I still believe, that America can never fulfill its complete promise until all our cities fulfill theirs. And I have watched you—I see out in this audience—I see Mayor White over there with his sympathetic arm injury with my leg there. Thank you very much. You'll be the company misery loves for me for a while. I have seen so many of you work so hard day-in and day-out to fulfill your own dreams, and I have seen the unique culture and richness of every city.

Mayor Abramson actually once took me to the Louisville Slugger baseball bat factory. For all you baseball fans, they have a bat Babe Ruth used in the season that he hit 60 home runs there. You can only find these kinds of things, uniquely, differently, in all of our cities in America, where the various richness and diversity of America is wound together in a wonderful fabric of strong, united values.

So, to me, when I come here I think of you the way I thought of myself when I ran as—

in the derogatory term that my opponent put on me in 1992—as the Governor of a small Southern State, because in my former life and in your present life, we did not get hired to make speeches and to posture, we got hired to mobilize people, unite people, and get things done, and denial was not an option. So I'm very glad to be here, and I want to thank you for all you have done.

What a long way we have come. It wasn't so very long ago that huge numbers of Americans had just simply given up on the prospect of our cities. But as Secretary Cuomo's compelling report, ''The State of the Cities,'' proves, our cities are back. We've got the biggest economic resurgence in cities since World War II; the unemployment rate down by a third in our 50 largest cities; more downtowns coming back to life with sports and tourism and local business booming. Congratulation on your two new stadiums, Mayor Brown. We're taking back our streets from the worst ravages of crime. New waves of immigrants in our cities are making positive contributions with new energy and new businesses. And because of your disciplined and creative leadership, the fiscal health of our cities is stronger than it has been in decades. Our cities are literally bursting with new ideas for reform that are actually changing people's lives.

I have seen what the empowerment zone has done in Detroit. I went to Toledo to see the oldest auto plant in America up and running and bursting at the seams with new employees, selling their products to Japan in large numbers. I have been to Boston where not a single child has been killed with a handgun in a year and a half. I know what the cities are doing, and I want America to know that the mayors of this country have literally changed the shared life of America in ways that affect not only our largest cities but our smaller cities and, as I said, the relationship that is inexorably intertwined between the cities and the suburbs.

You have helped America come back, and I am grateful. But I also know, and you know, that we have much more to do. We have to have more jobs for those who must now leave the welfare rolls because they're able-bodied. We must meet the challenge of absorbing new immigrants. We must deal with the rising tide of juvenile violence and juvenile drug abuse which has in our country continued to rise even as the overall crime rate has dropped dramatically. We must deal with the continued flight of the middle class to the suburbs. We must deal with the poor performance of too many of our schools, with the continuing health problems of too many people who live in the cities, and perhaps most important of all, with the continuing almost physical isolation of the poor in our cities, most of them young adults and little children.

During my time as President, instead of trying to either impose ready-made solutions from Washington or ignore the problems altogether, we have tried to give you and your communities the support you need and the tools you need to meet your own challenges, to use the National Government to empower local leaders, to make the grassroots progress that each and every one of you can celebrate.

We started with the economic program in 1993, which replaced trickle-down economics with invest-and-grow economics and included a number of initiatives for the cities: the empowerment zones and enterprise communities, the community development financial institutions, the earned-income tax credit, the dramatic increases in child nutrition. We continued with the urban initiatives of HUD, led by former Secretary Cuomo—former Secretary Cisneros and his able team, including Andrew Cuomo—that included an initiative on homelessness, on cleaning up our housing projects, on innovative ways to empower people who were dependent upon public housing.

We continued with the crime bill, which was largely written by big-city mayors, prosecutors, and police officers. Its strategy was hotly disputed in the Congress by people who believed in rhetoric instead of reality. But the strategy is now no longer open to doubt, as we've just seen our 5th year of declining crime, in the last year the steepest decline in violent crime of all.

We continued with the initiatives before the welfare reform law was signed, local initiatives in welfare which moved record numbers of people from welfare to work, and all the analysis showed that a great deal of them moved because of the local efforts that people were making.

The key to all this was to give individuals, families, and communities the power and the responsibility to solve their problems and make the most of their own lives. I want to press forward with this empowerment agenda. And today I would like to briefly discuss seven things that I think are important if our cities and,

therefore, our country are to reach their full promise in the 21st century.

First, we've got to keep working until we extend the prosperity of this recovery to every neighborhood in America. Second, we have to do more to take back our streets from crime and especially to prevent young people from falling into a life that will destroy themselves and people around them. Third, we have to finish the job of welfare reform by creating enough jobs for all who can, and now must, work. Fourth, we have to extend the benefits of homeownership even more widely to meet our national goal of having more than two-thirds of the American people living in their own homes for the first time in history by the year 2000. Fifth, we have to raise the standards in our schools and invest more in our young people. Sixth, we have to meet public health challenges, including HIV and AIDS. And seventh, we have to create in our cities our national ideal of one America that crosses all racial, ethnic, and other lines that divide us, committed to giving every child a chance to flourish and every citizen a chance to serve.

I want to work with you to put this agenda into action. HUD must be a good partner, the Labor Department will be a good partner, the rest of our administration must be a good partner. But we are working for you, to help you and your people do what they know how to do to make the most of their lives and their prospects.

First, let's talk about extending the benefits of the economic recovery. Our national economic strategy changed dramatically in 1993. We went from trickle-down economics to what I call invest and growth: reduce the deficit but invest more in our people and technology and in the progress of people in the future and open the world to trade in American products and services.

This is clearly working. Our economy is the strongest in the world, the strongest it's been in a generation. America is now the world's number one exporter. Unemployment has been below 5 percent now for a few months for the first time in 24 years; inflation at its lowest point in 30 years; over 12 million new jobs; the largest decline in income inequality since the 1960's; a 77 percent cut in the deficit—before the balanced budget agreement—a 77 percent cut in the deficit, from $290 billion a year to less than $70 billion this year. They said we could not cut the deficit and invest more in our people, but they were wrong. And you are reaping the benefits of that.

In this urban economic strategy that was a part, as I said, of the 1993 economic plan, the most important thing was to try to attract businesses and jobs back to our cities. We've created already 105 empowerment zones and enterprise communities, which provide a common combination of tax incentives and freedom from Government redtape for you to attract new investment. We are establishing a network of community development financial institutions to infuse our cities with capital.

It's very interesting to me—I discovered when I became President that we had been funding such efforts all over the world for years in the poorest places in the world, places with far more limited prospects than poor people in the neighborhoods of America, to grow and to build businesses and to build a future, and we had never done it in our country except on a very limited basis in Chicago and a few other cities. Now we are trying to do that all over the Nation.

We reformed the Community Reinvestment Act so that it works better to steer private capital from mainstream commercial banks into poor inner-city and rural communities. Now, since we reformed the Community Reinvestment Act there have been a number of studies which show that as much as $100 billion had been invested in these communities, which means that since the Community Reinvestment Act was passed in 1977, 70 percent of all investments it was designed to direct have been made since 1993. I am proud of that, and that also has contributed to the revitalization of many American communities.

We also recognize that a major barrier to urban economic growth is the contamination of otherwise attractive sites for development, known to you as brownfields, a word that is still a total mystery to most Americans. But you know what they are, and a lot of you have cleaned them up. We have worked hard to make those brownfields into productive assets and to clean up a record number of toxic waste sites, more in the first 3½ years of our administration than in the previous 12 years.

When I reached our historic bipartisan budget agreement with the leaders of Congress, they pledged to work with us to keep these initiatives going, to expand the empowerment zones, to expand the enterprise communities, to expand

the brownfields tax incentives. Furthermore, they also agreed to funds necessary to clean up 500 more toxic waste sites, to more than double the amount of investment in the community development financial institutions, to provide for urban transportation needs for people on welfare who must travel to new jobs, and to help people on welfare get more work.

Now, all these initiatives are essential to the health of our cities. They also agreed to enough funds to cover half of the 10 million children in America who have no health insurance. That will make a dramatic difference to those of you who have severe health costs that are unmet and unfunded in your cities.

But on the tax side—that is, dealing with the brownfields and the empowerment zones and the other tax incentives for the cities—the plans put together by the House and Senate committees simply do not live up to the explicit commitment of the budget agreement, and that is wrong. I know that many in Congress do not share my enthusiasm for these programs. Many of them have never seen your reforms at work; perhaps they cannot be blamed for not voting for what they don't know about. But the truth is that that budget agreement passed by overwhelming margins of both parties in both Houses. And I would think every Member of Congress, without regard to party, would like to be known as a person who keeps his or her word. It is up to you to make sure that they have the chance to keep their words. Do not let Congress get out of the commitment they made on this issue.

The second thing we have to do is to keep up with our fight against crime and violence. You and I know that crime's been going down for years and that the strategy we put together—together—of more police on the street, tougher punishment, fewer guns in the hands of criminals, and more prevention programs to give young people a chance to say yes to a brighter future—we know this is historically effective. We know we had the largest decline in crime in 36 years last year. Murders dropped a stunning 11 percent. Cities all around the country, including our host city here, have had big declines in crime. I have been on the streets of so many of the cities here present to see you and listen to you and your police officers and community leaders talk about what you've done on crime.

But a nationally publicized poll just last week asked the American people whether crime was going up or down; 25 percent said down, and 60 percent said up. Why is that? Partly, it takes a while for public perception always to catch up with reality. Partly, it's that the local news still leads with the crime story every night. And that's a problem for a lot of you and the image you're trying to fashion for your cities. But partly it's because, with all the drops in crime, America is a place with too much violence and too much crime—still, with all the progress we have made.

We have to finish the job of putting 100,000 police on the street. I will fight to make sure we keep that commitment. We have to continue to push for real juvenile justice legislation. We put a bill before the Congress that has more prosecutors, more probation officers, more after-school and other programs for at-risk young people. It's not very long on rhetoric; it's real long on results. And it basically grew out of what I have seen working.

I mentioned the Boston program. I went to Houston, and Mayor Lanier showed me what he did, mobilizing 3,000 inner-city kids in a soccer league and, before Tiger Woods won the Masters, 2,500 inner-city kids in a golf league. Giving our children something to say yes to: that's a part of juvenile justice.

I've been to places where the probation officers and the police officers make house calls and where people walk the streets and try to keep kids out of trouble. We just need a national bill which gives you the tools to do what you know you can do to save these kids' lives. That's all I want to do. And I want you to help me pass that kind of juvenile justice bill through the Congress, so that you can save the children of your cities. And I believe we can do that.

Let me say, you can go from New York to San Diego, from Seattle and Portland, all the way to southern Florida, and if you go to city to city to city, you see that it seems to be the everyday presence of law enforcement officers on our streets, working with citizens, that has done the most to bring the crime rate down.

We have done our part by trying to help you put 100,000 more police on the street. We've come a long way from 1992, when we've seen the violent crime rate triple in the preceding 30 years, with only a 10 percent increase in police officers. And you have learned so much

more about how to deploy those police officers. It's been really impressive.

I want to increase that presence even more by getting police to live in the communities they serve. Today I am pleased to announce that over the coming year we will start an Officer Next Door program through HUD. It will make it possible for police officers and their families to buy HUD-owned single-family homes in our central cities at a 50 percent discount. You have shown me how more police officers on our streets have made so many of our neighborhoods feel like home again. Just imagine what it will be like when more police make those neighborhoods their homes again.

And let me say just parenthetically—I want to give a little pat to Secretary Cuomo here—when I appointed him, I said, you know, I don't understand why HUD needs to keep all this surplus property all the time. Why do we need all this inventory? It's not doing any good just laying out there. And this is just the first of what I hope will be many initiatives. But if we can give these police officers and their families 50 percent discounts to move back into the inner cities, it will be some of the best money the Federal Government ever spent, and we want to do more of those things.

The third thing we have to do is to make sure we create jobs for the roughly one million people that have to move from welfare to work by the year 2000. Under the present welfare reform law, whatever happens to the economy, we have to move nearly a million people from welfare to work. We moved nearly a million people, about 900,000, from welfare to work in the last 4 years when we had welfare reform experiments going in 40 of the 50 States, and many of those only in part of the States. But when our economy in 4 years produced over 11 million new jobs, that had never happened before in a 4-year administration. In the next 4 years, we have to move that many people whether we produce 11 million more jobs or not. Can we do it? I believe we can.

I know a lot of you thought I made a mistake by signing the welfare reform bill. Remember, I vetoed two previous bills because I thought they were too tough on kids and too weak on work. But when we put back the guarantee of nutrition and health care to our children, when we came up with $4 billion for child care, when we agreed to leave the funding at the States equal to the amount they were getting when welfare rolls were at their all-time high, I thought it was worth the chance to change the culture of dependency.

Today, on the front page of the local newspaper, there is a study by the Federal Reserve of San Francisco saying that the rolls have dropped another 500,000 since the law came into effect, and they are now going down in virtually every State in the Union. We finally got a big drop here in California, which—because it didn't come back as quickly as the other States, it didn't have drops as soon. We can make this work. We can make this work.

In the budget agreement, we got agreement to restore the most egregious cuts in aid to immigrants, which I thought were wrong, the cuts to legal immigrants who come here, live by the rules, and work hard, through no fault of their own become disabled. We are going to restore those cuts, and I will not sign the bill unless Congress keeps its commitment in the budget agreement to do that. But that's in the agreement.

We have $600 billion through the Department of Transportation to help people on welfare travel to work, because there are a lot of cities in which right now, and maybe by the time the benefits run out, there won't be jobs but they're willing workers. There was an interesting study involving Atlanta not very long ago which said that in inner-city Atlanta, something like 80 percent of the jobs in the restaurants, fast-food restaurants, were held by low income people who lived in the cities. In the suburbs, only slightly more than 50 percent were. Obviously, if there was more transportation availability, we could do a better job of moving people that have to go to work where the jobs are, sometimes even within the cities themselves. So Secretary Slater and I are committed to that.

Most important of all, I have fought hard for—and it is in the budget agreement, and so far it's moving along nicely through the Congress—for $3 billion in welfare-to-work funds, which specifically gives our cities, working with the Department of Labor as well as with HUD and HHS and others, the resources that you need to create good jobs for people who can't get them otherwise. This is very important. Last year in Chicago there were six applicants for every entry-level job that opened up; in St. Louis there were nine. It is not true that these people don't go to work. And it is not realistic to expect that we can get all of them to work

within the time deadlines unless we put this money out there where you can use it to create jobs, good jobs for people who need them. So I ask you to help me pass that in the Congress.

Finally, let me say I know a lot of you are making new partnerships with the private sector. Mayor Brown told me this morning that the private sector here in San Francisco had pledged to him that they would take 2,000 people from welfare to work on their own initiative. In this bill there is a new tax credit, very tightly drawn, that gives a 50 percent credit for up to $10,000 in wages for people who are hired from welfare to work. That also is in the budget agreement and must pass.

Let me say, finally—I want to emphasize this again, just in case there are some of you who don't know it—the States of this country are getting over 20 percent more money today for welfare than they would have gotten under the old welfare law. They are still getting the same amount of money they got when welfare rolls were at an all-time high. We have had the largest reduction in welfare rolls in the history of the United States by far. They still have that money. What are they doing with it? You have to make sure that that money is spent in a way that helps the people, most of whom live in your jurisdictions, to go to work. If they need training, get them the training.

And let me say one other thing. One of the problems we have ameliorated in this deal but not completely solved is what happens to the single men who aren't on welfare in the first place. Most Americans, when they talk about welfare reform, are thinking about all able-bodied people who are idle because of the system. The biggest social problems out there, I would argue, are with the young single men. What's going to happen to them? This money can be spent to help you put them to work.

Now, I cannot do anything directly about that, but I implore you to go back to the people who represent you in the State legislatures and see how much money your States got, and ask them to use some of that money to give these young men a chance to build their lives, too, because they need to be a part of our future.

The fourth thing we need to do to make our cities places that anybody would be proud to call home is to make it easier for people to have homes in our cities. Homeownership is one of the most empowering things we can ever do for anyone. Since I took office, 4.7 million people across America have become homeowners for the first time. Homeownership has had big, big increases. As I said, our goal is to have more than two-thirds of the American people in their own homes by the year 2000 for the first time ever.

But you know and I know not enough homes are in our cities. In the last 4 years, we've reduced FHA mortgage premiums three times, to lower the average closing cost on a new home by $1,200. That's made a lot of difference to a lot of young people, and I'm proud of that. Today we're going to cut the premium another $200 for people if they buy homes in our central cities. This will bring the total reduction, since we took office, of closing costs to those families to $1,400.

Also, we know that there are many hard-working families who receive section 8 assistance who are ready to assume the responsibility of owning their own homes, but they can't take the first step. HUD now has a very innovative program before the Congress that would allow those families to use their rent vouchers to help to buy a home. Today I'm happy to announce that Freddie Mac is going to help us launch this homeownership empowerment voucher initiative by financing up to 2,000 of these mortgages.

Together with the Officer Next Door program, this represents almost $700 million in downpayment toward our priority of strengthening our cities family by family, by helping more people buy a home in the cities of America. And I hope you will support that as well.

The fifth thing we need to do is to make sure that our schools work and that all our children, no matter where they live, get the best education in the world. I know only a few mayors actually have any control over the school systems in your cities, but every mayor must be concerned about the quality of education in your cities. We know one of the main reasons families continue to leave cities is they simply don't think the schools are doing a good enough job.

Just this week, Hillary was visiting in a school system where junior high kids were talking to her about the problems they face. We know that these years are especially critical. But we also know our schools are capable of working.

Let me just give you one example. I hope that all of you noticed that for the very first time since we started participating in the international test on math and science, our fourth

graders—only a few thousand of them, about 13,000 of them around the country, took these tests, but they are representative by race, income, and region—scored well above the international average in math and science for the first time. We can make all our schools work. You know that, and I know it, but we have to.

Our eighth graders are still below the international average, and all of you know from your own experience what happens to these kids when they're subject to difficult influences and tough circumstances, when they get into those early teenage years. That's when we're losing so many of them. And we have to make our schools work if we're going to bring them back. We just have to do it.

We're working hard to connect every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000. Last evening I met with some representatives of the high-tech community who were helping us to do that. We've had wonderful support from industry, and a lot of your communities are just doing this anyway. But I'm telling you, when we've got every classroom and every library and every school in America connected to the Internet, and then when we learn to teach the parents of those children how to access the Internet so they can communicate, regardless of their work schedules, with the teachers—"Was my kid in school today?"—with the principals—"What can I do to help?"—when we do that, we are going to revolutionize learning in this country. We will democratize it for the first time ever. And it won't matter whether a child is living on a Native American reservation or an inner-city neighborhood in Los Angeles or remote town in the Ozarks of north Arkansas; they will all be able to get the same learning in the same way at the same time, for the first time in history. And all of us, whether we have direct responsibility for the schools or not, have an obligation to get that done as quickly as possible.

Secretary Riley and I are working to mobilize a million volunteers, to make sure that by the year 2000 every 8-year-old, wherever he or she lives and whatever their native language is, can read independently by the third grade. That is also terribly important.

We're working to make sure that 100,000 teachers in America are certified as master teachers, so that in every school building in the country there will be at least one teacher that you know has had the finest training available and passed the most rigorous standards that can then be imparted to other teachers in the school building. And above all, we have challenged our schools to set and meet high national standards.

Let me say, I am gratified that education officials representing over 20 percent of the children we educate in this country have agreed to participate in national exams like the international tests of reading for fourth graders and math for eighth graders by the year 1999. But a lot of people are holding back in these States. They say, "We don't want the Federal Government to take this over." The Federal Government has nothing to do with it, except we're paying for the test.

The vast majority of our States today participate in a National Assessment of Educational Progress, but they only give the test to a representative sample. They don't give it to all the kids in all the school districts in America.

Look at these last international tests. We have nothing to be afraid of. The only thing that's going to wreck our schools is if we hide our head in the sand, we don't say what the standards are, we don't measure whether our kids are meeting them, and we say, well, they just can't make it because they're poor or they come from some disadvantaged background. That is a load of bull. We need to get this out in the open and make sure all of our kids can meet these standards.

I spent a couple of hours with Mayor Daley and the people that are operating the Chicago school system not very long ago. The Chicago school system used to be known as the school system that went on strike every year whether they needed to or not. [*Laughter*] Every year in the Chicago paper—when I served as Governor and Jim Thompson was a Governor and his child was a student in the schools, there was always—you could just wait for—a certain time of the year, there would be a picture of little Samantha Thompson, who wouldn't be in school because the strike was going on. Now the Chicago schools are known for moving aggressively to stop social promotion, to raise performance, and that the city will take over the schools that are failing and straighten them up. We can do this. We can all do this.

The sixth thing we have to do is to do more to deal with issues of public health. And let me say something especially about HIV and AIDS, because it grips so many of our cities,

it costs so much money, but far more important, it costs so much in human lives and trauma.

Last month I issued a call to find an AIDS vaccine within the next 10 years. We have continued to dramatically increase the amount of money we're putting into research for that purpose alone, while having dramatic increases in care, prevention, and other basic research.

Yesterday in Denver, the other leading industrial nations of the world pledged to help us meet that challenge. But until there is a vaccine, you have to help us, and we have to do more in the area of prevention. It's our strongest weapon. That's why we have to continue to identify sound public health strategies that enable local communities to address the twin epidemics of AIDS and substance abuse, and you know better than anyone how intertwined they are. We will continue to work to provide the best treatment, the best services, the finest drugs. And we will help you to meet the cost.

And let me also say, we can't stop until we find a cure to bring a permanent end to the epidemic, nor can we limit our efforts only to HIV and AIDS. We know that in the 21st century, as people move around the world more rapidly, one of the single most significant security threats of the future will be the spread of infectious diseases that are no more than the airline flight of one infected persons on another continent away from your community. We know that.

We have got to build up our public health infrastructures, and we have to make sure that we have basic health services out there for all our children, which is why I say, again, one of the most important aspects of this new budget agreement is the funds it gives us to give health insurance to half the 10 million kids who don't have it. We need to keep going until every child in every community in America has health insurance coverage and the people that are providing health care can get reimbursement so we can build a network to protect our kids to give them good health and to deal with the challenges that are bound to come to American cities in the future.

The last thing I want to ask you to do is to make our cities the model of the one America we're trying to create, which deals not only with the racial initiative that I announced in San Diego 9 days ago but also with the primary purpose of the Presidents' Summit of Service that Mayor Rendell hosted in Philadelphia not very long ago.

Keep in mind, the purpose of the Summit of Service was quite specific. It was to save every child in America; to give every child a safe place to grow up; every child the health care he or she needs; every child a decent education so they'll be able to support themselves when they get out of school; every child a mentor who needs it—every single one a mentor, one-on-one, who needs it; and every child the chance to engage in citizen service.

Now, what's our job at the national level? An adequate education budget; a better health care effort; a crime program that will really work in the area of juvenile justice to give you the tools you need; and the work we do to help provide AmeriCorps volunteers that have done so much to help you fulfill your mission in city after city in America.

But you have to help us do that. That was not a one-time public relations stunt for me. I agreed to do that Presidents' Summit of Service because it had a very sharply defined mission and because it did not let me off the hook and it did not let Government off the hook. It said, we can't expect volunteers to replace what is the public's responsibility in education, health care, and public safety, but neither can you expect just that responsibility to change the lives of these children who are physically isolated.

I see Mayor Menino looking at me there. He may get some money from the Federal Government to hire police, but they decided that they'd have police and probation officers make house calls to kids in trouble, and they have an astonishing 70 percent compliance with probation orders in the city of Boston. I feel quite confident that that is virtually unheard of in America.

So there are things that you have to do. And there are things that even you can't do to give all these kids mentors. But you can get people to do that and then give them a chance to serve. Our national survey before that summit showed that 90 percent of the children in this country said they would—including the poorest kids—said they would be happy to engage in service themselves, but someone needed to ask them and tell them what to do. That is the job of adults.

So I want you to understand, I intend to do my job that I promised to do at the Summit

of Service. You have a role to play, but we have to recognize that it doesn't matter how rich we are, it doesn't matter how successful we are, if we keep raising generation after generation of poor children that are literally physically isolated from the rest of us, this country will never fulfill the American dream. And we don't have to put up with it. And you can help us change it.

And the last thing I want to say about this dialog on race is that it is the cities that have the biggest stake in this endeavor. Today, Hawaii is the only State in America that has no majority race. But no one who has ever been there doubts it is very much an American place, patriotic, upbeat, entrepreneurial. Within 3 or 4 years, California will have no majority race. Within 30 years, there will be no majority race in the country. Today, in Mayor Archer's home county, there are people from 146 different racial and ethnic groups.

Now, people expect that in southern California. But we're talking about Michigan, in the heartland. No one—I would say no one—virtually no one has stopped to think about what America will be like in a generation. And you say, well, Bosnia at least couldn't happen here. That's probably true because we have too much stake in our shared prosperity. But don't forget how quickly people who live together as neighbors for generation after generation have turned on each other, in Africa, in Bosnia. Don't forget how totally irrational it seems to us as outsiders, especially those of us who are Irish, that our relatives in Northern Ireland continue with what we think of as madness in the face of all the evidence that the world and the 20-odd percent of us who are Americans are dying to help them rebuild a better future than they could ever imagine if they would just give up hating each other because of 600-year-old disputes rooted in their religious differences.

We have a chance here to do something that has never been done in all of human history, since people first began together in tribes before there was a written history and identified people who looked different from them and lived different from them as their potential enemies. We have a chance to rewrite the rules of human evolution, almost, by building the world's first truly great multiracial, multiethnic democracy. And it will have to be done in the cities where the people are.

So I say to you, we have an opportunity here because we're doing this not after some riots, not because we know there's a big, long legislative agenda that needs to be passed but because we know there is still prejudice and discrimination and, maybe even more important, still stereotyping which blinds us to the possibilities of our people.

Why do you really think that so many people are reluctant to belly up to the bar and participate in these national tests? Not because they're afraid that the test scores will be bad the first time, but because they're afraid they'll never get any better, because of our stereotyping, the shackles in our minds. We cannot afford it. The cities cannot afford it.

The cities of America are bursting with excitement and success. There's hardly a one you can go to that just doesn't fill you with the human potential and connections that are being made. We have to make that the rule in America. We have to make that the order of the day. We have to make that the governing public philosophy of all our citizens. And if we do, our lives will be a lot more fun and a lot more interesting. And being a mayor will be even more exciting 10 years from now and 20 years from now and 30 years from now than it is today.

So I say to you, all the other things I said, none of it will happen, and you know it won't happen, unless we learn to live together, relishing, celebrating, loving our diversity but being bound by things that are even more important.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to J. Thomas Cochran, executive director, United States Conference of Mayors; professional golfer Tiger Woods; James R. Thompson, former Governor of Illinois, and his daughter, Samantha; and the following mayors: Willie Brown of San Francisco, CA; Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; Paul Helmke of Fort Wayne, IN; Deedee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT; Norman B. Rice of Seattle, WA, and his wife, Constance; Wellington Webb of Denver, CO, and his wife, Wilma; Michael R. White of Cleveland, OH; Jerry E. Abramson of Louisville, KY; Bob Lanier of Houston, TX; Edward Rendell of Philadelphia, PA; Thomas Menino of Boston, MA; and Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Senator Barbara Boxer in San Francisco
June 23, 1997

Thank you very much, Senator Boxer, Senator Torricelli. Delaine Eastin, thank you for being here and for supporting our educational standards and excellence movement. I thank the Saxophone Quartet and the Bacich School second grade choir. I thought they were both terrific. [*Applause*] Thank you. I guarantee you one thing, when the kids were up there singing, every one of us was saying, ''I wonder if I could sing that song, if I could remember all those States in alphabetical order.'' [*Laughter*] Good citizenship.

When Barbara Boxer was finishing her remarks, Bob Torricelli, who is an old friend of mine—old friends talk, she should have chided us for talking—[*laughter*]—Bob Torricelli leaned over to me and said, ''She is the best spirit in the entire Senate.''

You know, in the spirit of campaign reform, I think you know one of the things that I favor is full disclosure. And for those of you who don't know, Barbara Boxer's first grandchild is my second nephew, so that's really why I'm here. [*Laughter*] It has nothing to do with party or conviction or anything. Therefore, I have had an unusual opportunity to get to know this woman, and what I can tell you is that everything I have ever seen of her in private is completely consistent with the face and the voice she presents to the public. And that is important. What you are seeing is exactly what you get 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 weeks a year.

And while we normally but not always agree on the issues, the thing I would like for you to think about today is the spirit, the heart of the matter. I've been here a good while now in Washington, and I had a real life before I moved to Washington—[*laughter*]—and I expect to have a real life when I leave. And I have almost come to the conclusion that more important than the ideological debates or the party differences is which spirit will dominate Washington as we move into the 21st century.

I mean, here we are basically with the strongest economy in a generation, with an unemployment rate below 5 percent for the first time in 24 years; the lowest inflation in 30 years; and for us Democrats, a very important statistic, the biggest decline in inequality among working families in over three decades; the number one exporter in the world; the lowest deficit as a percentage of our income of any major economy in the world; a crime rate that dropped—the biggest drop in 36 years last year; before the welfare law took effect, the biggest drop in welfare rolls in the history of the Republic. And yet, there are really still people in Washington who seem like they're mad about it. [*Laughter*] And they want to do whatever it takes to make sure you don't think about it. And this whole spirit, you know, are you going to be for the people who try to drive you down or the people who try to lift you up. That's really what it's about.

You know, you listen to some of these people talk in the Nation's Capital, you'd think that they spent the whole morning sucking lemons before they got up to give the speech. [*Laughter*] And you listen to Barbara Boxer talk in the middle of a rainstorm and you'd be convinced you were on the beach in some sunny resort. [*Laughter*] It's a difference in approach to life and attitude and whether you believe the purpose of politics is to elevate the human spirit and bring people together across the lines that divide them and make people believe that tomorrow can be better than today, or whether you believe the purpose of it is to carve out your little niche of power and anything that threatens it, including good news, should be crushed at the earliest possible moment with whatever means at hand.

Now, that really is the great choice here. You must not let this woman be defeated by all the people who will say, well, she's too liberal on this, that, or the other thing. If she ever made a mistake in her life, it was a mistake of the head, not the heart. And don't you ever forget it. We all make mistakes.

And that is really what is at issue. I have done everything I can as President to heal the kind of divisive, destructive, political climate that has come to dominate too much of the discourse in Washington, the automatic assumption that anybody who is different from you has got something terrible wrong with them, the feeling that anything you can do to beat somebody who is