

to help people move from welfare to work, and I appreciate their doing it. Remember that. I feel like I'm hawking something on one of those channels on television—[*laughter*]*—1-888-USA-JOB1—I can do this.*

Let me close by putting a personal face on this. There's a woman on stage with us today who is an example of what someone who once was on welfare, with serious obstacles to overcome, can do to become a valuable and successful employee. Felicia Booker's success took courage, responsibility, and a dream that she could make a better life for her young children, ages 2 and 6. It also took an employer, A.G. Edwards, willing to take a chance on her, and people along the way who wanted to help her realize that dream. Felicia Booker has been working at A.G. Edwards for nearly a year and a half now. She's a computer programmer, and she's already been promoted once. I'd like for her to stand and be recognized. Felicia? [*Applause*]

Again let me say, if this is really going to be a country where everyone has an opportunity,

then we have to prove that the young women I just met in that job-training program downstairs are going to be given the opportunity to make the most of their own lives. Ultimately, that's what welfare reform is about. It's not primarily about saving the Government money; we're going to balance the budget regardless. It's about empowering every single person in this country to be a part of this country in a new century, in a new era.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. on the factory floor. In his remarks, he referred to Barry Corona, chairman of the board, Midwest Technology Corporation of St. Louis (Mid Tec); Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis; State Representative Steve Gaw, speaker of the house, and State Senator Steve Ehlmann, senate minority leader, Missouri General Assembly; State Senator William Clay, father of U.S. Representative William (Bill) Clay; State Treasurer Bob Holden; and Missouri Secretary of State Bekki Cooke.

Remarks to the Democratic Business Council in St. Louis *August 12, 1997*

Thank you. Thank you very much. First let me say a thank you to all of our Missouri hosts: Governor Carnahan and Congressman Gephardt; Mayor Harmon, thank you for making me feel so welcome to be back in St. Louis; Treasurer Holden; your State chair, Joe Carmichael; I saw Attorney General—I mean, Senator Jay Nixon here a minute ago—[*laughter*]*—wherever he is. I'd like to acknowledge the presence here of the distinguished Democratic Senator from Illinois, Dick Durbin, who is here somewhere, I think. He was here earlier; I don't know if he's still here. He may have left. He's heard me give this speech before. [Laughter]*

This is, I think, my first opportunity to say a profound thank you to the people of Missouri for voting for Bill Clinton and Al Gore both in 1992 and in 1996, and I thank you for that and for giving us a chance to serve.

Dick Gephardt already told you some of the good results that are happening in our country. You know these things, of course. I think what

I'd like to talk to you about today is why I think your contributions are important, why I'm glad you're helping our congressional campaign committee, what we hope to achieve in the coming months, and more importantly, what we hope to achieve in the years ahead.

When I ran for President in 1992, as merely—to put it in my distinguished predecessor's phrase—merely the Governor of a small Southern State, one of the things that it seemed to me was that this was a country full of wonderful people, great businesses, hard-working people, people who knew what was going on in the world, and people who were anxious to take advantage of the changes, and that we were actually being disabled and limited by the way our political system worked, that we didn't have a clear driving vision about what we wanted to look like in the 21st century and we didn't have a strategy for getting there. And I had a pretty clear, if simple, idea about what I

thought America should look like when my daughter is my age. I still have that simple idea.

I want this to be a country where everybody, without regard to where they start in life, has a chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given capacities if they're willing to work for it. I want this to be a country that is coming together, not being driven apart by its diversity. And I want our country to be a place that still leads the world for peace and freedom and prosperity.

And if you want that, it's pretty easy to ask what strategy should you follow. You should do those things which create opportunity, which reinforce responsibility, which bring people together in a community of one America, not divided, and which support our world leadership in productive ways. This has not been rocket science. There has been a lot of hard work, and I've been willing to work with our friends on the Republican side when they would work with us. And when they wouldn't, as in 1993, when Dick Gephardt and I and a few others were all alone and we had no help in starting the work of reducing the deficit and getting it 80 percent done before this last budget was passed, we've been willing to do that.

But I want to make this simple point: There is always first a vision, and then there is a strategy. And people either spend their time working to implement the strategy and build something positive, or playing politics as usual. And I think the record of the last 4½ years shows that it is always better to build than to tear down; it is always better to unite rather than to divide; it is always better to look to the future rather than to bring people back kicking and screaming to a past that can no longer be maintained.

And that is why these meetings and others like them we'll be having around the country are so important. Believe you me, if you look at this budget we just passed—which had the biggest increase in funds for child health care since Medicaid was passed in 1965, the biggest increase in Federal support for education since 1965, the biggest increase in helping middle class families educate their children in 50 years, since the GI bill was passed for college education—none of that would have been possible if we didn't have so many members of our party in the Congress. That was our contribution to this budget. Cleaning up 500 toxic waste dumps, that was our contribution to this budget. Making sure that the hardest working families in this

country, the first-year police officers and nurses, firefighters with two or three kids, could take full advantage of the children's tax credit, those were our contributions to this budget. None of it would have happened if it hadn't been for the clear knowledge I had that there were people who literally viewed the world the way I do and were willing to fight for it and stand up for it and speak for it.

We are within sight of winning back our majority in the House. We know that they will have more money than we will, from all sources—maybe a lot more. But my experience in this business has been, it's okay if they have more, but you have to have enough. You have to have enough to get your message out. You have to have enough to give people a sense of who you are. You have to have enough to be able to answer if attacked in a way you consider to be unfair or inaccurate. And if you do, and if you work hard and if you have the right vision and the right strategy and good candidates, you can win.

And I want to say again, we are very close now to starting a new century in a new millennium. And yes, we have made dramatic progress. I'm glad we've got the best economy we've had in a generation. I'm glad we've got the lowest unemployment we've had in 23 years and the lowest inflation in 30 years and the highest rate of new business starts in history. I'm glad we had the biggest drop in violent crime in 35 years. I'm glad we had the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history. I'm glad now we've got the smallest percentage of people on welfare we've had since 1970. I am very proud of all of that.

Does anyone seriously believe that this country is at this moment meeting your standards of what you want it to be like when we start the new century, what you want it to be like when your children or your grandchildren are your age? The answer to that is no. We can do better, and we have to do better. We have to do better. We have to have, among other things, a country that says whether a child is a poor immigrant child in St. Louis or a farmer's child in North Dakota or a child in a wonderful private school in New England, they all should meet the same standards of international excellence in what they learn when they're in school. And until we do that, we will not be where we need to be in education.

We need to say that in the poorest neighborhoods of this country, people still have a chance to start a business, free enterprise still has a chance to take hold, people still have a chance to build a framework of community. And if we can't do that when the economy is strong, when can we do it? We have to do that.

We have to be able to prove that we can grow the economy and preserve the environment. We have to prove that we can continue to reach out to the rest of the world with economic and political and security partnerships. We are still not where we would like to be in our heart of hearts as we move into this new century.

And finally, let me say I think very few people have thought about just how rapidly we are changing. Now, you know, I come from not very far south of here, and I can tell you, I don't know many people I grew up with who wouldn't be surprised if I told them that unless something dramatic happens within 30 to 40 years, there will be no majority race in America. But that's the truth. Today, in our country, Hawaii is the only State where there is no racial group in the majority. Americans of European descent and Americans of Japanese descent are about 30 percent of the population, Americans of Filipino descent and native Pacific Islanders are about 16 to 18 percent, and everybody else makes up the rest. But within 5 years, there will be no majority race in California, our largest State with 13 percent of our people. Within 30 to 40 years, unless something dramatic happens, Americans of European descent will not be a majority race in the United States for the first time since its founding. Now, we always say, you know, we're a country founded on ideas and values, not race and place. We're about to find out. We're about to find out. And we need to be thinking about that.

And I can tell you—we just had a delegation come back from Africa—the largest number of Africans in the world outside Africa live in the United States. And Mr. Gephardt will tell you, we have great bipartisan support now in the Congress for our Africa trade initiative. Why? Because there are almost a billion people in sub-Saharan Africa, and only 7 percent of their imports come from the United States.

So this is an economic issue, but at a deeper level it is a human issue. What occupies the President's time in the world today? You pick up the paper this morning, you see us worrying

about Bosnia or the Middle East or Northern Ireland. Everywhere somebody is fighting over their racial, their ethnic, or their religious differences. We are the country with the largest number of people from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. And if we prove we can live together and work together and succeed together, that is the single biggest asset we will carry for world leadership, for prosperity, and for peace of mind into the next century.

So I ask you to think about that. Yes, if crime is not an issue, if welfare is not an issue, if the budget is going to be balanced, and all you have to think about is what you want your country to look like in the future, then ask yourself which party is more likely to deal with the fact that 20 percent of our kids are still living in poverty; which party is more likely to deal with the fact that even though crime is down, our streets are too violent and too many of our kids have nothing to say yes to; which party is more likely to deal with the fact that we must have a national standard of excellence in education and stop making excuses for not giving that kind of opportunity to our poor children; which party is more likely to passionately care about reconciling the economy and the environment so that we don't have to give up our children's natural heritage to make a living today; which party is more likely to pull this country together across all the lines that threaten to divide us? I think the answers are easy and straightforward. But keep in mind, if you believe that, there has to be an opportunity to exercise that. I could not have accomplished anything in Congress—with Congress, anything that required congressional action, and most of what I have done with executive action could have been undone by Congress, had it not been for the support I had from the members of my party there.

Now, we have worked hard. We have a record that commends itself to the American people, and we have a chance to win their confidence in the congressional elections of 1998 if you will be there for our leaders and our cause. And if you think about the big issues, what you want this country to look like when your children are your age, I think it will justify your presence here today and keep you working right through November of next year.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. at the Windows on Washington restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mel Carnahan of Mis-

souri; Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis; and State Treasurer Bob Holden.

Remarks at a National Conference of Democratic Mayors Dinner

August 12, 1997

Thank you. Give the Vice President a hand. [Applause] You know, if he keeps practicing, he's going to get good at this. [Laughter] I'd forgotten we did half of that stuff. [Laughter]

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, for your remarks and for the historically unprecedented partnership that we have enjoyed. I was sitting there thinking as Al Gore was talking that when I asked him to join the ticket back in the summer of—or the late spring of 1992, it violated all convention. We were the same age. We were from the same part of the country. We both spoke without an accent. [Laughter] It didn't make any sense. It violated all the conventional ideas. The thing that I thought made sense about it was that I believed we needed to change the country, we needed to change the direction and the way politics works in Washington, we needed to change the way the Federal Government was organized, and we needed to change in some ways not the values or the aspirations but the approach of our own party. And so I thought I would do something unconventional and pick someone I thought could be the best possible full partner. And that's what we've done.

And I hope that, frankly, it will be a model for future administrations of both parties, because it seems to me rather foolish to not make the most of the incredible potential that you now know the office of the Vice President has because of the way that Vice President Gore has filled it. He's headed our reinventing Government program. He's done a masterful job of working with the mayors and with Secretary Cuomo and Secretary Cisneros before him and working with the empowerment zone program and the enterprise communities. He's basically led our efforts in telecommunications policy, our efforts to put computers in our schools. And by the way, we've got some money for that in our budget, so we'll be able to help your cities hook all your classrooms and libraries up

by the year 2000. He has headed a special commission with the Prime Minister of Russia and a special commission with Mr. Mbeki of South Africa and taking a leading role in every single foreign policy and defense decision of this administration.

There is really no precedent for this in the history of the country, but I hope that we have set a precedent, because this is a better country because of the work that Al Gore has been able to do this last 4½ years. And I hope others will see that and in future administrations this model will be followed.

I want to thank Steve Grossman and Alan Solomont as well for being here and all the other people from the Democratic Party. I thank all the mayors who are here. I looked at you stand up, and I bet I've spent more time in more cities, in more different kinds of neighborhoods than any President ever has. And I'm not bragging, I'm thanking you, because I never learn anything when I'm up here talking, I only learn something when I'm out there looking and listening, and you have helped me.

Keep in mind, I was born in a town of 6,000 people, and I grew up in a town of 35,000 people, and between, I lived out in the country where we had a lot more animals than people. [Laughter] And my State had 2.3 million people and only 4 Members of Congress. But I've always loved and been fascinated by cities of all sizes, and I think that the central reason is that in cities people know that they have to work together to get anything done and they understand that their own individual and family well-being depends upon other people being able to do well at the same time, side by side with them.

And in a way, that is ultimately the value that I hope will distinguish our party as we move ahead, that we stand for the future, not the past; that we stand for unity, not division;