

Linda Chavez-Thompson, a member of my race advisory commission. She has seen discrimination firsthand. She knows discrimination is not a thing of the past, but she is determined to see that it has no place in our future. I am grateful for her help, and I ask you for yours.

A century ago, the working men and women of labor imagined an America where older people had health security, where African-Americans enjoyed equal protection under the law, where working people had the right to organize and fight for a better life. Because they imagined it and because they worked for it, it's the America we're living in today.

Now it is up to us to imagine the America of the 21st century. And on every issue I discussed today, that is all I ask you to do. Imagine it, based on what we now know. Imagine an America in which every child has a world-class education, in which every family can fairly balance the demands of work and childrearing, in which we lift living standards here and around the world, in which we learn to grow our econ-

omy and preserve the common environment which is our home, in which our oldest values of opportunity, responsibility and community guide us into a new time of greatest opportunity.

As American working men and women have shown time and time again, if we imagine it and we work at it, we will build it, an America for our children, always eager for tomorrow. You have brought new energy to the labor movement. You have brought new energy to America. Let us work to build that into a future we can be proud of.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Convention Hall at the David Lawrence Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to John J. Sweeney, president, Richard Trumka, secretary general, and Linda Chavez-Thompson, vice president, AFL-CIO; Sandra Feldman, president, American Federation of Teachers; and Arturo Rodriguez, president, United Farm Workers of America.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Pittsburgh September 24, 1997

That was an interesting introduction. [*Laughter*] You know, I have to begin by saying, when my friend of more than 30 years now, David Matter, made that reference to Henry Kissinger's joke about it's the 90 percent of the politicians that give the other 10 percent a bad name, I think it's only fair to tell you that he succeeded me as the president of our class at Georgetown. [*Laughter*] He was in the 90 percent. [*Laughter*] I never said anything like that until this event was already put together and organized and successful.

Thank you, David. I want to thank Phil and Diann. I want to thank my good friend John Connolly; it's wonderful to see him up and about, so trim, young looking. [*Laughter*] Audrey; and Mr. Mayor, thank you; and thank you, Mike, for what you said. And Commissioner Cranmer, we're glad to have you here.

I was hoping there would be at least one Republican here because when I came in here, I said, "This is a pretty nice club. It makes me feel almost like a Republican." [*Laughter*]

And one of the people at the table said, "If we had held this dinner a few years ago, you would have had to be one to get in." [*Laughter*] So it's nice to see that even that barrier of discrimination is being broken down. [*Laughter*]

I'd like to thank all the other folks who are here: Judge Del Sol; former State Treasurer Catherine Baker Knoll; former Lieutenant Governor, Chairman Singel; your former mayor, Sophie Masloff—we had a lot of fun together in Pittsburgh. Mayor, I have fun with you, too, but it's not quite the same, you know. [*Laughter*] And Senator Mellow, Senator Bodak, and all of you, thank you for coming.

I love coming here. I like western Pennsylvania; I love Pittsburgh. It's one of those towns where I can walk up to anybody on the street and ask them what the score was in last night's Pirates game, and they'll all know. It's a place where people are proud of their roots, proud of their ties, proud of their community.

I'm delighted that you have some ties to Arkansas—my good friend Lazar Palnick there—

even though I'm a Southern Baptist, I used to refer to his father as my rabbi. And I've always felt a certain affinity for this community and an affinity for western Pennsylvania. And you've been wonderful to me now through two elections for President. And this is really the first opportunity I've had since the '96 election just to say simply, thank you. And to all the people of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, thank you for being so supportive of what we have tried to do together.

This is a proud time for America. The economy is in the best shape it's been in in a generation. We're working hard to make the world a more peaceful, more prosperous place. And we're proving once again that we can constructively deal with our problems.

It's the sort of time that I dreamed about in 1991 when I declared for President. And the country seemed drifting; it seemed divided to me; it seemed—it was clearly in difficult economic shape. And the thing that bothered me most—you know, we'll always have bad times as well as good times. No course of life ever runs smooth; it's part of human nature and the inherent rhythm of events. But what bothered me in '91 was, it seemed to me that we had no strategy, no clear vision that a strategy could be developed to support. And when I think of how fast the world is changing, how fast—the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to each other and people indeed all across our Nation and all across the world, I still have the same simple vision I had when I declared for President.

When I leave office in the 21st century, I want this to be a country where everybody who is responsible enough to work for it has an opportunity to live out his or her dreams. I want this to be a country that is celebrating its diversity but coming together as one America, not being divided as so many other places in the world are divided today, by race or religion or culture. And I want us still to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity, not meddling around the world and trying to solve all the problems but being a beacon of hope, an example and, yes, being involved where we can make a difference. That's what I want for America.

And I've worked hard for that for the last 5 years. None of it would have been possible if it hadn't been for people like you all across this country. But every one of you know that

this area of Pennsylvania has been especially good to me and to the Vice President and to our efforts.

Now, in order to achieve that, it seemed to me we needed to say, "Well, what kind of policies would you develop to achieve that? What would they be like?" And I'll tell you what we talked about back in '91, before I ever announced for President. I think it's a mistake to run for President before you have a general idea about what you're going to do if you get there. It's kind of—the Presidential election is this vast job interview. It's pretty scary; 100 million people can want to hire you, and you can still get fired. It's pretty disorienting. *[Laughter]*

But it seemed to me we needed policies that focused on the future, not the past; on unity, not division; on the interest of people and our basic values in this country, not power politics; that focused on America leading, not America following; that focused on the need for a certain kind of Government, not a Government to do everything and certainly not a Government to do nothing but a Government whose primary mission would be to give people the tools to make the most of their own lives; and finally, that we had to begin with a new economic strategy that would make the economy work for everybody, not just for a few people.

And we began with the economic strategy. I used to say it's a stool with three legs: We have to reduce the deficit until we balance the budget; we still have to find the money to invest in people and in technology and in research, the things that will build our future; and we have to expand American trade in our products and services, because we only have 4 percent of the world's population, but we enjoy a high standard of living because we produce 22 percent of the world's wealth. And in a world becoming increasingly competitive, increasingly open, increasingly interconnected, you cannot expect to maintain 20 percent of the wealth with 4 percent of the people unless you go where the business is.

So that's what we've tried to do, hard, for 5 years. And the results have been what you know they are: unemployment under 5 percent, 13 million new jobs, over a million new construction jobs—a lot of you helped to create them in this room—half a million new machine tool operators, half a million new people working in transportation. The last 2 years, over half

the new jobs paid above average wages, something that was not the case for new jobs for many years in the 1980's.

The average income is beginning to rise, and that gap which had been widening for 20 years seems like it may be coming back together now between the middle class, lower income working people, and upper income people. From World War II to the mid-1970's, we all grew together. And then as the economy began to change and we didn't develop an effective response to it, we began to grow apart, so that those of us that were in a very good position to take advantage of the emerging world economy did just fine, and those of us that weren't got hurt. And now we're beginning to turn that around, partly because of the second part of the strategy, investing in people. If people are the most important part of the new economy, it follows by definition, their health, their education, and their ability to raise strong families are the most important parts of our strategy there.

So we've worked hard to do what we could to stabilize the health care situation for Americans, to help do things that would lower the rate of inflation without eroding the quality of care, pass the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill which says you can't lose your health insurance if you change jobs or somebody in your family gets sick.

We had a dramatic increase in research and support for diabetes in this last budget, which the American Diabetes Association said was the most important thing since the discovery of insulin in 1927. We've worked hard on breast cancer, prostate cancer, a lot of the other major health problems this country faces. We've worked hard to do something to put a stop to the marketing and sales of cigarettes to teenagers, still our number one public health problem.

In this last budget, \$24 billion was allocated to provide health insurance to 5 million children, half the children who don't have health insurance in this country. Almost all of them, by the way, are in working families whose place of work does not provide them health insurance.

In education, we now have had from 1993 to the present an enormous increase in Federal support for education. This last balanced budget had the biggest increase in Federal support for education since Lyndon Johnson was the President of the United States in 1965, and the biggest increase in helping people to go to college

since the GI bill was passed 50 years ago. And it's going to change the future of America.

Now, with the things that were in this last budget, we will have a million work-study positions for people who go to college; the biggest increase in Pell grants in 20 years; an IRA where people can save in an IRA and then withdraw from it without penalty if they use it for their education or their children's education; a tax credit of up to \$1,500 a year for the first 2 years of college; a HOPE scholarship to open the doors of 2 years of college to everybody; and continued tax credits for any kind of education, undergraduate or graduate, or job training after high school.

We can now say for the first time in the history of the country—when all these tax credits kick in next year, we'll be able to say for the first time that any American who's willing to work for it can have a college education. That's never been true before. And that's something all of you can be proud of, because if it hadn't been for you and people like you, we in Washington would never have been in a position to do it. It was the central pledge I made to the American people in the 1996 campaign.

So we're moving along. Crime has dropped every year the last 5 years. Part of the reason is we're supporting local strategies that work—more community police in the street. The Brady bill has kept 250,000 people with criminal or mental health histories who shouldn't have handguns from buying them. And there was a study released just last week which said that illicit gun dealers have had terrible difficulty operating in places where it's vigorously enforced. This is a safer country than it was 5 years ago.

We have the lowest percentage of our population on welfare than we've had since 1970, in spite of 20 years of the most active immigration in our country's history. Why? Because we pursued a welfare reform policy that was tough on work, but pro-family and pro-child.

So you can be proud of where we are because all of you had a role in it. But it only sort of indicates where we have to go. Now, as I look to the future both this year and the years beyond, we've still got to do things to keep this economy growing. That's why I want this fast-track trade authority that I went to the AFL-CIO to talk about today. And we differ about it.

But we're not going to save any jobs by leaving our trade relations as is with countries a long way from here, when our markets are more open than theirs. But if they open their markets to us, we can sell more. Seventy percent of the growth in America's overseas trade this last year came from Canada to the tip of South America and our own backyard. And the further you go away from here, the less likely it is that any of you or anybody else would want to shut a plant down in America and move it down there to sell products back here. Labor is becoming an increasingly smaller part of manufacturing costs anyway. This is about selling America's goods and services, and it's also about partnerships with new democracies, to keep us the world's leading force for peace and freedom.

We've got an education fight going that's a real doozie in Washington now over whether the Congress will prohibit me and the Secretary of Education from spending any tax money to have a nonpolitical board, established by Congress years ago, with Republicans and Democrats on it and educators on it, develop a national examination for reading for fourth graders and math for eighth graders, to be given voluntarily and with no mandated consequences to every fourth and eighth grader in the country in 1999. Why? We are the only advanced economy in the world that does not have a national set of academic standards, a definition for academic excellence, even a definition for academic adequacy.

This has nothing to do with local control of the schools. Reading and math are the same in Michigan and Montana and south Florida and San Diego and northeastern Maine and northwestern Washington. It's about whether we believe our kids can learn and whether we're going to expect them to. I can tell you this: All the evidence is they can. Our schools are getting better. This last year, for the first time ever, America's fourth graders scored above the international average in math and science. And we had a few thousand kids take it, but they were representative by race, by region, and by income.

So our kids can learn what they need to know to do well, but we've got to measure it to see whether they do or not. Any of you running any enterprise here, if I suggested that you stop measuring it tomorrow, you would be without profits before long. If you didn't keep up with your performance, if you didn't define success

in some way, if you had no way to know whether you were up or down, truly, measured against the competition which is global in nature, you would have difficulty. That's all I want to do.

We're going to try to deal with some of the most difficult issues in the world over the next several months in trying to reconcile our need to grow the economy and the environmental problems that are developing around the globe and the requests that have been made of all of us, Europe, Japan, all the advanced economies, to try to do something about greenhouse gas emissions. Can we do it without hurting economic growth? Of course we can, if we do it right. It's going to be something that all of you will have to be concerned about and involved in.

We have to reform the entitlements for the baby boom generation so the next generation will have Social Security and Medicare. It is wrong for us not to make modest changes now that will save Social Security and Medicare over the long run. We've already made some modest changes in Medicare that I believe will add more than a decade to the life of the Trust Fund. But you can't expect all these young people to support those of us who are in the baby boom generation, when there will be barely two people working for every one person retired, without making some changes. We cannot raise the payroll tax any more on ordinary people or small businesses. There are ways—modest changes that can be made over the next 2 to 3 to 4 years, very modest changes which will avoid that, and we have to deal with that.

Just one or two other things I wanted to mention. We are finally, it looks like, going to get a vote in the Senate for the first time in 5 years on campaign finance reform, and I think that's a good thing. But I want everyone to understand, who is here at this dinner today, the real problem with campaigns is how much they cost. The amount of money raised is a direct relationship with the perceived requirements of how much they cost. So if you want to have campaign finance reform, particularly if this country is not prepared to go to taxpayer-financed elections, like many nations do across the board, except we just do it for Presidents then we must do one thing: You must give people access to mass communications for free or reduced rates if they adhere to the standards of the campaign finance laws. That must be done. And we're looking into that.

But the Senate has got a good bill before it. They're going to debate it. They're going to vote on it, and that's a good thing. And I'm proud that it was precipitated at least in part by the unanimous vote of the members of my caucus in the Senate—our party's caucus—to support the McCain-Feingold bill.

Finally, let me say this. If you look to the future and you ask, what is the issue most likely to define America in the 21st century—of all the many issues we can deal with, what is the issue most likely to define us? Well, what has defined us for 200 years? People think this is a place uniquely devoted to freedom and opportunity, where every person gets his chance at the brass ring.

They know that we've been imperfect. I'm leaving you to go home to Little Rock to observe the 40th anniversary of the Little Rock Central High School crisis, a glaring, timeless example of the imperfection of America the nation not living up to America the idea. But we also know that from the beginning, when we started out with a Constitution that said African-Americans equal six-tenths of a person, we have come a long way. We have steadily pushed back the barriers that bore down on people, people of color, on women, all the groups of people that have ever been discriminated against. We are steadily pushing back those barriers.

But if you really think about what's likely to define us, you imagine what's the world going to be like. It's going to be a high-tech world dominated by information technology where distances will be shortened, millions—that's no exaggeration; I talked to the people who set it up last week—millions of new contacts are happening on the Internet every month, probably every week. They can't be measured. Literally it's growing by millions and millions and millions a month and probably a week. That is the world we're going to live in. Now, if we in the United States have the most multiethnic, multiracial functioning democracy, where we don't just live in the same country but in little different places, and then we vote on election day, and that's all we have in common, but we actually live and work together and learn together and grow together, then we will be the most well-positioned country in the world for the 21st century.

It is, therefore, in our self-interest to rid ourselves of the last vestiges of the poison which seen in its darkest form can destroy a place like Bosnia; can bedevil the home of many of

us in this room, including Mayor Murphy, in Ireland—we think we're making some progress there; can keep the Middle East in constant turmoil—and they've got all kinds of social problems in a lot of those countries there. If they were all working together, they could turn the whole region around in a matter of a decade. And on and on and on—you know the stories.

If we are the polar opposite of that, in a world where we have the world's finest system of higher education, where we're on the cutting edge of technology, where we're committed to all the things we've been talking about today, and we're all getting along together, this country is going to do very well, and the next 50 years will be the best 50 years in American history.

Now, I was raised to believe that's what we owe our children. And I was raised to believe that none of us—it is not given to any of us to solve all the problems or to transform human nature; it is our responsibility to leave the world better than we found it. It is our responsibility, in the great stream of human existence, to make our contribution to the right direction. That's what we've got a chance to do. And we owe it to our children.

And from the day I started running for this job, all I ever wanted to do was to make sure that, when it was all said and done, people like you, who share the same values and ideas I did, could actually say together, we gave opportunity to everybody responsible enough to work for it; we are coming together as one country, not being divided; and we are the strongest force in the world for peace and freedom. I still think we're moving in that direction, and we have another 3 years. And I'm going to give you every day I can to make sure we get there.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:39 p.m. in the Walnut Room at the Duquesne Club. In his remarks, he referred to David Matter and Phil and Diann Stout, State Democratic Party trustees; John Connelly, president, J. Edward Connelly Associates; Mayor Tom Murphy of Pittsburgh; Mike Dawida and Bob Cranmer, Allegheny County commissioners; Audrey Dawida, wife of Commissioner Dawida; Judge Joseph A. Del Sol, Democratic candidate for Pennsylvania State Supreme Court; Mark Singel, chairman, Pennsylvania Democratic Party; State Senators Robert J. Mellow and Leonard Bodak; and Pittsburgh attorney Lazar M. Palmick, originally from Arkansas.