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I also want you to know that we have to continue in Washington to fight for the right to organize and to function in a union that will permit you to have a life you enjoy. We know that workers in unions typically have not only higher pay, but have access to higher skills, better continuing education, which is good for the rest of the country. You make the rest of us stronger as you learn more new things and do more new things and continue to push us in the future. There is a bill now in Congress that would let businesses fire or refuse to hire union organizers. If it passes, I'll veto it. But you ought to help me do this in the first place. [*Applause*]

But let me say—I thank you for that cheer. But what you really want is to never even have to think about cheering for something like that again. Because what really works—what really works is when we all work together. You can help management make a bigger profit. You can help the owners of every enterprise earn more money. You can make the private sector stronger and help create more jobs if we will cooperate in a spirit that says we have to reaffirm the dignity of the people who work for us day-in and day-out. They ought to be able to raise their children in dignity. They ought to be able to educate their children. They ought to be able to know that when their kids get sick they can go to the doctor. They ought to be able to know that when they come of age, they can go on to college. We ought to live in the kind of country that says we are going to make the future better for our children, and we are going to honor our parents.

On my wall in my private office on the second floor of the White House, I have a letter written before I was born to my aunt in Texas by the man who was then the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Sam Rayburn—legendary Speaker of the House of Representatives from Texas. And he wrote my aunt a letter when my father was killed in a car wreck. My aunt gave me that letter last year, 50 years later. But I see that letter all the time, and it reminds me not only of my family ties but of Sam Rayburn and the kind of leadership he gave to our country. Sam Rayburn said something about politics that all of you especially should always remember. He said, "Any old mule can kick a barn down. It takes a carpenter to build one." And what I'm trying to do is to hold down the barn kickers—[*laughter*]—and lift up the builders. I want you to be with me.

Thank you. Bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. in the training center shop area. In his remarks, he referred to Maggie Carlton, member, Culinary Workers Union Local 226, who introduced the President; John J. Sweeney, president, Linda Chavez-Thompson, executive vice president, and Robert Georgine, Building and Construction Trades Department president, AFL–CIO; Douglas J. McCarron, general president, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada; Mayor Jan Laverty Jones of Las Vegas; and Bill Howard, apprenticeship coordinator, and Paul Sonner, instructor, Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Training Center.

Remarks on the Safe Schools Initiative

March 19, 1998

Thank you very much, Superintendent Berg; Madam Attorney General; Senator Robb, thank you so much for your efforts. Congressman Castle, thank you. Mayor Donley, welcome; and I want to say a special word of welcome to all of the students. I'm glad you're here today, and I thank you for the example you're setting for students throughout our country.

I also want to commend the students who were the winners of the State math and science award earlier this month. This school is proving that by taking the right kind of action, working with law enforcement, enforcing zero tolerance for guns and drugs, involving parents, establishing discipline and order as primary goals, we can keep our schools safe and give our children the chance to reach their highest potential.

Now, in less than 650 days, all of us will enter a new century and a new millennium. At a time when we're doing everything we can to prepare our children for the opportunities of that new century, at a time when we know

that the body of knowledge that human beings have is doubling every 5 years, and therefore, education will be more important than ever before, we cannot let violence, guns, drugs stand between our children and the education they need.

For more than 5 years, we've worked now to make our schools places of learning, not fear. We have worked to strengthen and expand the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, to enforce zero tolerance for guns in schools, to encourage communities to crack down on truancies, to support those who wish to adopt school uniform policies. Wearing uniforms instead of gang colors in many places is helping to keep our children safe.

It was just a little over 2 years ago that I went to Long Beach, California, the first large school district to adopt a school uniform policy. Since then, Secretary Riley and the Department of Education have worked to help those schools that wanted to do that. Yesterday the New York City school board announced that it would adopt a school uniform policy in all its elementary schools. I applaud them for taking this important step, and I predict it will have very beneficial consequences.

Our budget makes an unprecedented commitment as we are moving into balance for the first time in 30 years to invest for our future, by raising standards and improving education for all our children and to make our schools safer. We know schools with the biggest discipline problems also have the highest rates of violence. Very often, there are simply too many students and too few classrooms with not enough teachers. Our budget, as Senator Robb said, will help to reduce class sizes to an average of 18 students per class in the first, second, and third grades, with 100,000 more teachers and funds to build or rehabilitate 5,000 schools.

Perhaps even more important in the short run, on the violence issue—and I was glad to hear Mr. Berg talk about this—it will quadruple Federal support for after-school programs to keep children in school, in wholesome, positive environments. We know that most children who get in trouble do so between the time school lets out and their folks get home from work. So I applaud you for what you're doing, and I hope now, if this budget passes, there will be many, many more schools, until every school in America will offer this kind of community support to our young people and their families.

The fundamental issue here is that we do not need to and we must not ever have to make a choice between safety and high standards, between crime-free schools and modern classrooms. We must do both. I regret that the present budget, reported out by the majority in Congress, does not embody that kind of commitment to education and our future, does not embody the recommendations I made in the State of the Union Address.

Today I ask the Republican leadership to join with the leaders of the other party, to get with the Democrats, and to work with the White House so that we can once again, as we have in the past, pass a bipartisan budget that puts education beyond politics and says yes to safer schools, yes to new teachers and smaller classes, yes to modernizing our schools, yes to investing in high standards. We need to have a budget that says yes to our children's future.

The Nationwide Report on School Safety that is being released today by the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education shows clearly that the majority of our schools are safe, free of violent crime. That is good news. It also shows, however, that too many of our children face a far more frightening reality every time they walk through the schoolhouse door. In 1996 alone there were more than 10,000 physical attacks or fights with weapons in schools; 7,000 robberies; 4,000 rapes and sexual assaults. The threat of such violence hangs over children's heads and closes their minds to learning. When children have to worry more about guns and drugs than math and science, when teachers are more concerned with maintaining discipline than achieving excellence, when parents would rather keep their children at home than risk their safety at school, then we know we must do more. And if there is even one school in America where that is the case, we must all be committed to change it. We already know the difference community policing makes.

Since we began to help our local communities to put 100,000 more community police officers on our streets, crime has dropped to record lows all over our country. Indeed, in the Nation overall, crime is at a 24-year low. I thank Senator Robb for his sponsorship for the $17½ million in the balanced budget bill which is now being awarded today in grants to communities, parents, and law enforcement groups to put these community policing strategies to work in our schools, to stop violence before it starts.

The more we know about school violence, the more we can do to ensure our children's safety. Last December I asked the Attorney General and Secretary Riley to develop an annual report on school safety. Today I'm pleased to accept their framework for these reports. From now on, at the beginning of every school year, parents and principals, lawmakers and law enforcement will have a valuable tool that tracks school violence, gives examples of school programs that are working, and suggests actions parents can take to make their children's lives safer at school.

We know one of the best ways to reduce violence is to involve the young people themselves. In the last several years, AmeriCorps volunteers particularly have helped hundreds of students to resolve their conflicts peacefully. This adds to AmeriCorps' remarkable record of helping improve our schools and communities through volunteer service.

Parenthetically, I want to say that today we had an announcement up on the Hill, with the First Lady participating, that we are sending legislation to Congress to extend our national service program into the 21st century. I hope Congress will support AmeriCorps as it has in the past.

Let me say, finally, as Mr. Berg said so eloquently, we know that all of our schools need parents to play the primary role in their children's safety, both in the school and in the home, and when necessary, in the neighborhood. Today I ask all our parents who are concerned about this to become involved in your communities and your children's schools, to join a community policing partnership. Senator Robb got the budget; we're releasing the funds. We can talk about what works, but in the end, real live American citizens are going to have to show up in every school in this country to make this work.

You know, if you look at these young people here today, if you think about the remarkable achievements of this fine school we honor, if you imagine the interesting, fascinating lives they can have, and you remember that, as they have good lives, it will make all the rest of our lives better, it is clear that we all have a responsibility to ensure that their educations will be safe. We can do this, and America's future in the 21st century depends upon it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:09 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Herbert Berg, superintendent, Alexandria City schools, Alexandria, VA; Mayor Kerry Donley of Alexandria, VA; and students from T.C. Williams High School, whose success at reducing violence and crime was accounted during the event.

Videotaped Address to the People of Africa

March 19, 1998

To all our friends in Africa, let met me say how very much I'm looking forward to my upcoming trip. I'll travel to Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, Botswana, and Senegal. It will be a real privilege for me to be the first American President to visit those countries.

This journey will be my opportunity, and yours, to help to introduce the people of the United States to a new Africa, an Africa whose political and economic accomplishments grow more impressive each month. I want to see for myself what America can learn from Africa and how we can work with you as partners to build a better future for all our children.

As I visit your countries and meet your leaders and citizens, I'll have in mind four central goals for us to work toward together. First, we want to support Africa's democracies, those with long and proud histories and those that are newly emerging. Together we can create a global community of nations that respect and promote human rights, tolerance, and broad participation in public life.

Second, we want to increase trade and investment with Africa. When it comes to economic development, America and Africa can help each other, opening markets, building businesses, creating jobs on both continents. A prosperous future awaits us if we strengthen the economic