

She must have been about 8 years old, maybe 7. I said, "Well, I wanted you to have a better future; I wanted your country to do better; and I wanted you to live in a safe world." And she said, "That sounds pretty good to me." [Laughter]

When I ran for President in 1992, I wanted this country to move in a different direction. And here we are, on the edge of a new millennium, just 2 years away from a new century, a new 1,000 years, an amazing time. Hillary was in Seneca Falls and at George Washington's Revolutionary War headquarters and other places in New York, sort of promoting our idea of how we should mark this sea change in history by honoring our past and imaging our future, a future where things are changing faster and more profoundly in the way we live, the way we work, the way we related to each other and the rest of the world.

We've been working on this for 6 years, thanks to New York in 1992 and the magnificent victory the people here gave us in 1996. And I thank you. And you ought to tell the doubters that there is a connection between the economic and social policies and foreign policies this country has pursued for the last 6 years and the fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years, the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years, the highest homeownership in history, with the lowest, smallest Federal Government in 35 years. And I am proud of that.

We also made the first 2 years of college virtually free to most Americans; opened the doors of college to everyone; immunized over 90 percent of our children; kept 250,000 people with a bad criminal or mental health history

from buying handguns, with the Brady bill; banned the assault weapons over the opposition of the other party. The water is cleaner; the air is cleaner; the food is safer; there are fewer toxic waste dumps. We are moving in the right direction, my fellow Americans.

And our party right now is working in Congress, not just to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, but also to put 100,000 more teachers in the early grades, to build new schools and repair old ones, to bring economic opportunity to urban neighborhoods and rural areas that haven't gotten it yet, to have a genuine environmental policy that will deal with the problem of climate change and continue to grow the economy, that will have record amounts of money going into medical research and other scientific research, in short, that will prepare our path for the 21st century.

And in almost every area, we are being opposed by the leadership of the other party. The choice is clear. The record is clear. The results are in. You're here—go out of here and tell the American people you're proud to be part of the direction we're taking to tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:24 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to actors Alec Baldwin and Kim Basinger, reception hosts; New York State Democratic Chair Judith Hope; Tom Twomey, Alan and Susan Patricof, and Liz Robbins, event cochairs; Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; the music group Hootie and the Blowfish; Assemblyman Gregory W. Meeks, 31st New York District; Lt. Gov. Betsy McCaughey Ross of New York; and Mark Green, New York City public advocate.

Remarks on Summer Jobs Program Funding in Cheverly, Maryland

August 3, 1998

Thank you very much. Let's give Terence another hand. Wasn't he good? [Applause] Well, I would say Terence has gotten quite a lot out of his job opportunity here. And he made quite a good speech. Maybe he needs a summer job with Wayne Curry or Congressman Wynn or

Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend or the President or something. He's very good, I think.

I'd like to thank my friend, Wayne Curry, for that wonderful welcome. I thank Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend for her

sentiments and her passionate work for our children. And I thank, in his absence, Governor Glendening for his support for so many good causes, but especially the one we have come here to advance today.

I thank Al Wynn. He didn't even come close to breaking the Barbara Mikulski step up here. [Laughter] But every day he comes close to the ideal of what I think a Congressman should be.

I thank the State and the local officials who are here, and I thank this hospital. As Wayne said, it's quite an accommodation to take in a Presidential visit, and I thank them for making me and Secretary Herman and our party feel so welcome.

I, too, want to say my personal thanks to Secretary Herman for her role in settling the General Motors strike. We want to keep the economy going, and we don't do very well in America unless all of our autoworkers are out there working hard and making cars. And I know we're all grateful for that.

Let me say to all the young people here in this audience on the summer job program, both those behind me and on the stage and those out here in the audience, I am very proud of what you're doing here, and I hope you are as well, because whether you're serving lunch in a cafeteria or escorting patients in the hallways, you're not only helping this hospital to help others, you're helping to build a better future for yourselves, proving that, given the opportunity to work and to learn, there is no limit to what our young people can do.

I want to talk to you today about what we are doing to make sure more young people have the chance to continue to participate in summer jobs and to continue to improve their education. One of the principal reasons I ran for President in 1992 was to make sure that, as we move into the 21st century, every young person in this country, without regard to their income, their race, their background, or where they live, would have the opportunity to make the most of his or her life.

I wanted to create a 21st century America where the American dream is alive for all our people and where our people are coming together, across all lines that divide us, into one American community and where that gives us the strength to continue to lead the world to greater peace and freedom and prosperity. None of that can occur unless we make sure that

every American has a first-class education, and then, that we have an economy that functions so every American can make the most of that education.

Right now in Washington we are preparing the budget that will determine how we continue to reform, renew, and advance education next year. This isn't just a normal budget. Because of 5 years of strict budget discipline in our Nation, this will be the first balanced budget in most of your lifetimes, the first one in 29 years. It is also a validation of our economic strategy that you can cut the deficit and continue to invest money in people, in science and technology, in education, in the environment, in building the right kind of future. We have to do both.

To do our part, I have proposed in this balanced budget a comprehensive education agenda with high national standards; more accountability; more school choice in charter schools; more well-qualified teachers; smaller classrooms; modernized schools equipped with computers and hooked up to the Internet; reading tutors for children who are falling behind; before- and after-school programs and summer school programs to keep young people learning in the classroom, not lost on the streets; and summer jobs programs, like this one, to give young people the skills they need to succeed when they leave school and to give them something to do and a way to earn money during the summer.

I believe all these things are necessary to help all of you and people like you all across this country live up to their God-given potential. I believe they're necessary to make the America we all want in the 21st century.

I am very proud of the fact that today we are enjoying the lowest unemployment in 28 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years; we have the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years; and as I've said, we're about to have the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years, the highest homeownership in history. I'm proud of that.

But this is a rare moment in American history when we have a lot of confidence about our ability to make things work in this country. And we have to use it as an opportunity to act, to give everyone—everyone—a chance. We can't let this moment pass us by. And we have to make progress, both parties together, especially when it comes to the interest of children, education, employment, and the future.

There are, as you have already heard from previous speakers, those in Congress who disagree with this agenda. They have proposed a narrow and much more partisan plan that, in my view, is not a step into the future but a step backward. At a time when we should be increasing our investments in education and training, their plan actually cuts more than \$3 billion from the plan I proposed. At a time when we should be raising standards and challenging our students to meet them and helping school districts with a lot of poor children to do just that, their plan would prohibit the development of national tests for our schools. At a time when more children enter school now than anytime since my generation, the baby boomers, were in school, I have proposed to expand Head Start. Their plan would deny 25,000 children the opportunity to participate in that important early learning program when compared with my budget.

My America Reads initiative, which already involves volunteer students from 1,000 colleges and universities around America and many churches and other organizations going into the schools, working with children one-on-one to make sure they can read independently by the time they finish the third grade, it would give thousands more students a chance to have a tutor and to help them learn. Their plan would cut that program off without a penny.

At a time when we should be helping young people learn the skills they need to succeed in the jobs of tomorrow, their plan would make it harder for 400 of our school districts across America to buy computers. It would cut \$140 million from my proposal to expand after-school programs that keep young people learning in the classroom, not lost on the streets, in the hours of prime activity for juvenile crime. And believe it or not, the House Republican budget plan would even kill summer jobs programs like this one next year.

I'm sure when you started this program some of you didn't know how rewarding it would be. I was quite amused to hear what Terence said about his experience and the dress code. [Laughter] But now that you know how rewarding these programs can be, now that you know that there is no limit to what you can achieve if you continue to work hard and be responsible citizens, you must surely know that other young people like you deserve the same chance next

year and that you may need this chance next year.

Today, because of the budget we passed last year, there are half a million young people just like you in summer jobs programs. And if my budget passes this year, there will be half a million next year. But if the House Republican budget passes, most of those children would not have a job next year.

And that's not all the Republicans plan to do away with. At a time when more families have both parents working, their plan would cut nearly \$180 million from my proposal to make child care centers better, safer places for our children. At a time when we are struggling so hard around the world to protect children from being abused in other countries to send cheap products here, it undercuts our ability to fight the exploitative practice of child labor. At a time when our Nation is experiencing extremely severe weather, from crippling cold in the winter to record heat waves that have killed more than 100 people already this summer, the House Republicans want to eliminate the program called LIHEAP that today helps millions and millions of families, millions of families with low incomes, a lot of them very vulnerable older people, pay for home heating and, this summer, for cooling cost. If this budget were to pass, those folks would be on their own.

This is a time when we ought to be putting progress ahead of partisanship. We've got all the evidence in the world that when we do that, it works. Look at how America is doing. The House Republican plan puts politics ahead of people and puts your future in the backseat. That is wrong. And if a bill like the one that is proposed by the House Republicans passes, I will veto it.

I have sent Congress a balanced budget that proves we can maintain our budget responsibility and still invest in our people. So far, Congress hasn't passed that budget or one of its own. Within less than 2 months, they'll have to act because our new budget year will start. Because of the delay, they may decide to send me a barebones budget that fails to expand the critical investments we need to make, from education to summer jobs to school modernization to child care. But the last budget of the 20th century should be preparing our Nation for the challenges of the next. I will not accept a budget that fails to do this.

Aug. 3 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

There are those in both parties who understand this. It was mentioned earlier that the Congress, just last Friday night, passed the Senate bid, the “GI bill” for America’s workers, that consolidates scores and scores of disparate training programs into one program that will give skills grants to people in their working years, to adults who have to go back to school and learn new skills. It was one of the major commitments I made when I ran for President in ’92. I have worked for 4 years on this. So there is the capacity there to forge this kind of bipartisan relationship. We have to do it for summer jobs and for education.

Let me just close with this—it’s not in my notes, but I was looking at Terence up there talking, and I thought you might like to know that, over 30 years ago, I was involved in two federally funded summer jobs programs. I didn’t get to wear a shirt and tie to work; I was working at our National Park in my hometown doing basic maintenance and clearing work. And then I worked in a summer camp for disadvantaged young people where I was a counselor, after

my first year in college. I loved that work, and I loved those kids. And I was very grateful that my country gave me an opportunity to do something productive, to learn something, and to make a little money.

I hope when the history books are written, it will look like a pretty good investment that was made in a young man from a modest family in a small town a long time ago.

You, too, will do great things. And, in part, it will be because your country has believed in you and invested in you. And I don’t want us to stop. I want us to do more.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in the Deitz Memorial Auditorium at Prince Georges Hospital Center. In his remarks, he referred to Terence Newton, who introduced the President; Prince Georges County Executive Wayne K. Curry; and Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland. The President also referred to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Statement on Congressional Action on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

August 3, 1998

Tonight’s vote for the Shays-Meehan bill is a breakthrough in the fight for bipartisan campaign finance reform. The breadth of its support, from Members of both parties, showed that reform is an idea whose time has come, even in the face of persistent obstruction by the Republican leaders of Congress. It is time to ban soft money, improve disclosure, and curb backdoor campaign spending. Now, a majority of both the House and the Senate have gone

on record for this legislation. I urge the House to move this legislation to final passage before they adjourn for the August recess. And I urge the Republican leaders of the Senate, who are using procedural tactics to block this measure, to listen to the will of the majority and the loud voice of the American people. I congratulate Representatives Chris Shays, Martin Meehan, and their colleagues for their courage and their persistence.

Remarks on the Anniversary of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

August 4, 1998

Thank you. Thank you very much, Vesta Kimble, for that fine statement and for the good

work you do. And I welcome your colleagues and co-workers from Maryland here. I thank