

Remarks to the NCAA Football Champion University of Tennessee Volunteers August 17, 1999

The President. Well, chancellor and Coach Fulmer, Tee, Mercedes—this is the most disgusting pander I've ever seen. [Laughter] You know, Coach Fulmer came up 48 hours ago, and he and Al practiced all this 15 times. [Laughter] We're going to be cited by the Federal Election Commission for this event. [Laughter]

Let me tell you—you know, I'm not running for anything. I can tell you the whole story about this—[laughter]—this Tennessee-Arkansas deal. Everything he said is true. And for all of you who are covering this who aren't from one of the two States, let me—the game was an unbelievable game, and Arkansas was ahead at the end.

And there was only a minute and a half to go, and we seemed to have an insurmountable lead. And our quarterback was trying to kill the clock, a little of the clock. And the Tennessee line broke through the Arkansas offensive line and tackled him behind the line. And he fell, not with his free hand but with the hand on the ball, which squirted out into the arms of Tennessee. And the rest is history.

Who's responsible for that over there? [Laughter] Raise your hand, there. Give him a hand over there. [Applause] Bring that guy up here. Get him up here. Come on.

And what you really don't—what Al couldn't tell you, because he's not like me; I'm not running for anything—[laughter]—is that I was actually watching this game as this foreign policy crisis was unfolding. [Laughter] And I was talking on the phone, injecting things, and they thought, you know, I was being tougher on what was happening on the phone, and I was really just reacting to the ballgame. [Laughter]

But to be fair, to be perfectly fair to Tennessee, I think that you had over 40 yards still to go—

Coach Fulmer. Forty-six.

The President. —for a touchdown, right? Forty-six. [Laughter] So it wasn't like he fumbled on the goal line. And they rolled down there like there was nobody there. And they won the game, and they went on to the national championship.

And I paid off my bet, and—

The Vice President. I'll get you some ribs. [Laughter]

The President. —and we've had a lot of laughs about it.

But I do want to say, you know, I was the first President from my home State ever elected. I owe a lot to Tennessee; if it hadn't been for the Vice President joining the ticket, I might not have won the first time, almost certainly wouldn't have won the second time, because we made all the record we made together. And so I feel deeply indebted.

And all I can say is, we're even now. [Laughter]

Actually, I was very impressed. I like teams, and people, who don't quit, who never say die, and who stick together.

I like the fact that this team had a lot of stars, at different times during the year, but won as a team. You had—Peerless Price caught a, what, a 76- and a 79-yard touchdown pass in the Fiesta Bowl, but he wouldn't have been there to catch those passes if this guy—[laughter]—hadn't broken through the line, somebody else hadn't kicked a field goal, and if all the guys in the line who never get their names called on television didn't show up for every play and play like crazy.

And I think it's important. And I think it's a real tribute to these young men, and to their fine coach. And I think it should be obvious to anybody who knows anything about college football, and anything about this coach, anything about this program, that this is a program, and a team, founded not just on strength and speed and talent but also on thinking and effort and courage and good values.

And in that sense, in winning the national championship and in winning it the way they did, in a highly competitive season, they reflected credit on the entire United States of America.

And every—every—person in America should be proud of them. I certainly am, and I wish you well in getting back next year.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to University of Tennessee President J. Wade Gilley, Coach Phillip Fulmer, and Volun-

teers team members Tee Martin, Mercedes Hamilton, Travis Henry, and Peerless Price; and University of Arkansas quarterback Clint Stoerner.

Statement on the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse August 18, 1999

Today's 1998 national household survey on drug abuse reveals that we have turned an important corner on youth drug use. Last year youth drug use declined significantly, and fewer young people tried marijuana for the first time. This encouraging news shows that more young people are getting the message that drugs are wrong and illegal and can kill you, and today's report contains even more good news: Current cigarette use dropped to the lowest rate ever recorded by the survey.

While these results give us reason to be optimistic, we cannot let up on our efforts. We must continue our unprecedented media campaign to reach our children with powerful anti-drug messages, not cut it back just as it is making an impact. We must expand our partnerships with community antidrug coalitions and work to enact our long-term drug strategy. Together, we can steer our children away from drugs and toward a brighter future.

Remarks on the Baby Boom Echo Education Initiative August 19, 1999

Thank you very much, and welcome to the announcement of the administration's program to save the future for Secretary Riley's grandchildren. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your passionate dedication and leadership. Thank you, Wendell Greer. I also want to acknowledge here people who will be involved in, I think, briefing later: Dan Galloway, who is the principal of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois; Dr. Daniel Domenech, the superintendent of the Fairfax County schools; and Dr. Iris Metts, the superintendent of the Prince George's County schools, who was here at the White House with us when I signed the ed-flex bill last April.

This is a busy time for educators, and I appreciate them for taking the time to join us. It's a busy time for parents and students, too, thinking about the back-to-school season. In so many ways it represents a new beginning. People get used to new teachers, new classmates, new schoolbooks, new jeans and clothes. It reminds

us of the vital role that education plays in our children's lives and in the life of our Nation.

Today I want to talk about what the previous speakers have said in terms of what it means for America, not just in a new school year but in a new century. In our lifetimes we have never had a better chance to prepare America's children and America's schools for the demands of the 21st century. We can do it because of the longest peacetime expansion in our history, the highest homeownership, over 19 million new jobs, welfare at a 32 year low, crime a 26-year low, teen smoking, teen pregnancy, and as our annual survey showed just yesterday, teen drug abuse all down. We have a record surplus of \$99 billion, and it's projected to grow and to sustain itself over the next 10 years.

Now, there's a great debate in Washington about what we should do with this surplus and, in a larger sense, how to fulfill the promise and the obligation of preparing our schools and our children for the 21st century. How will we seize this chance to shape the future?