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Okay, so I'll say again, you can win this election in Arkansas for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman if you want to bad enough. And you just think about what we've got. We've got a chance, as Dale said, that at least in my lifetime we've never had, and we may not have it again in our lifetime, to literally build the future of our dreams for our kids.

So you just go ask people three questions: Do you want to keep this prosperity going and extend it to the people who have been left behind? Do you want to build on the progress of the last 8 years? Do you want to keep doing it as one America, keep bringing people together? Do you want to vote for somebody who is experienced and solid and proven, who will work hard, who knows a lot, who understands the future? You just have one choice. It's not close. But it needs to be clear.

You've got 2 days to make it clear. Please, go do it. You'll be proud you did for the rest of your life.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. in the ballroom at the Statehouse Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Arkansas State Attorney General Mark Pryor and his father, former Senator David Pryor; Kenneth L. Smith, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior; James R. (Jim Bob) Baker, Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration; Janis Kearney, Special Assistant to the President and Special Advisory for Presidential History; Carroll Willis, director, community service division, Democratic National Committee; former Senator Dale Bumpers; Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas and Vice Presidential candidate Dick Cheney; and former Secretaries of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin and Lloyd Bentsen.

Remarks to the Community in Pine Bluff, Arkansas

November 5, 2000

The President. Thank you all very much. I want to thank—first, I thank the choir and my friend of nearly 20 years Carrie Paige, who looks exactly like she did 20 years ago, and I look 50 years older. [*Laughter*] God's been good to you. Thank you for your song; thank you for your music, all of you, so much.

I want to thank all the folks who came here with me: our State party chair, Vaughn McQuary. I want to thank Attorney General Mark Pryor—I don't know if he's here or not—there he is—the chairman of the Gore/Lieberman campaign in Arkansas. Thank you for taking it on. I want to thank my friend Lottie Shackelford and Sharon Priest and Hank Wilkins and all the other local officials.

And I want to thank my good buddy Congressman Danny Davis, who is from the Mississippi Delta in Arkansas, Phillips County, but now represents Chicago and is my great friend; thank him for coming here. I want to thank Carroll Willis, who has worked with me at the DNC for 8 years and has come down here and is working hard for us.

I want to thank James Lee Witt and Rodney Slater. What a great job they have done for you and for all America. They're two of the most popular people who have served in the Government in the tenure I've been there.

And I want to thank Dale Bumpers, who has stood by me through thick and thin and voted to turn this country around with the economic plan of 1993. I cannot tell you what having Senator Bumpers and Senator Pryor there early in my Presidency meant, not only to me but to the United States of America. They miss him in the Senate, but I'm glad he's home and stirring around with you.

And it's not true I fell asleep on him coming down here. [*Laughter*] He just has such a soothing, melodic voice, you just sort of drift off, you know? [*Laughter*]

I wanted to come down here for a couple reasons today, first of all to say thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. [Applause] Thank you.

Mike Ross—I met Mike Ross in 1982, when he was a teenager and he was driving me

around, and I was trying to do something in 1982 that had never been done before. I had been elected Governor and defeated, and I was trying to get elected again. And that's a pretty difficult psychological thing, because you can't go tell the voters they were wrong. [*Laughter*]

On the other hand, if you tell them they were absolutely right, they wonder well, why should they make a mistake then if they were right the first time to kick you out? So we were weaving around it. And we knew that the election would turn on what happened in eastern Arkansas, what happened in the 11 counties of northeast Arkansas, what would happen in the Delta, and whether we could get two-thirds of the vote in Jefferson County.

And I thought about it today, looking out at this sea of faces, when election night came in and the early votes came in and our friends down here said, "You're going to carry this county two to one." I thought, shut the door; the election is over; we're going back into the Governor's Mansion. Thank you for that, too, all of you here.

Now I want to talk a little bit about the future. I came down here for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Mike Ross. But I also came down here for you and your children and your communities in this State that I love so much. You've been so good to me.

Look, this is the first time in 26 years I haven't been on a ballot somewhere. [*Laughter*] But it's okay. [*Laughter*] It's okay. And I am a little worried about what's going to happen to me when I leave office. They tell me I'll be lost for the first 3 or 4 months because, when I walk in a room, nobody will play a song anymore, and I won't know where I am. [*Laughter*]

But I want you to think about this. This election is just as important as the election in 1992 that sent Al Gore and me to Washington. And yet, sometimes I think people don't think that because things are going so well. And I can just say, number one, anybody in this audience who is over 30 years old knows this statement is true. If you've lived more than 30 years, you can remember one time at least in your life when you made a big mistake not because things were going so tough but because they were going so well, you thought you didn't have to concentrate. Is that right?

Audience members. Right.

The President. Okay. So I just want you to take a minute or two and concentrate, and then I want to ask you to help concentrate the energies of every person you know in this State, and especially in this congressional district, on this election. It's about you and your kids and your grandkids and the future of our State and Nation.

And you know, President Reagan used to say that there was a simple test for whether the party in the White House ought to be continued: Are you better off today than you were 8 years ago? Of course, they have now revised their position. Their position on that is, that's a test only if the Republicans are in. [*Laughter*] But they said it and said it and said it.

What I think the question you have to go out and ask people is—and I want you to think about it—I think this whole race for Congress and for the Presidency and Vice Presidency comes down to three questions: Number one, do you want to keep this prosperity going and bring it to the people that haven't felt it yet? If you do, you have a choice. Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Mike Ross—what do they say? They say, "First, let's keep paying down the debt. We've worked too hard to turn that deficit around. Let's get America out of debt for the first time since 1835. And then we'll figure out what we've got to do to do that, and then we'll take what's left, and we'll invest in education and health care and the environment and the national security of the country, and we'll give the American people a tax cut they can afford for college tuition, for long-term care for our parents, for child care, for retirement savings. Pay down the debt to keep interest rates low and economic growth high; invest and cut taxes, but within the discipline of thinking about our kids and our grandkids."

Now, you've got a choice. What do the other folks say in the Republican Party, Mike Ross's opponent and the candidates for national office? They say, "Hey, it's your money. We've got a surplus. We're going to give it all back to you now." Right? They say, "Vote for us; we'll give you a tax cut that's 3 times as big, and if you're young, we'll let you privatize your Social Security taxes so you can put them in the stock market; and if you're not so young, we'll just keep writing your check. And, oh, by the way, here's a little money we want to spend."

Now, what's the problem there?

Audience member. It doesn't add up.

The President. Yes, it doesn't add up. [*Laughter*] I want you all to listen to this. I want you all to listen to this; this is simple. People ask me all the time, "What great new progress did you bring to Washington?"

[*At this point, an audience member required assistance.*]

The President. Do you need to move that, gentlemen? Okay. Go ahead. We need some help here. Can we have one more person up here? He's just hot. Give him a hand. [*Applause*]

You all listen, this is one thing you could say that might change some votes in the next 2 days, and it's simple—and a lot of people don't know it. They admit, the other guys do, the surplus is supposed to be $2 trillion over the next 10 years. Now, who knows? Trillion, schmillion, that's a lot of zeros. [*Laughter*] Let's make it simple. Let's say 2, okay? Then their tax cut and the interest rate associated with it costs 1.6 trillion—1.6. Then their privatization of Social Security, as the Vice President has pointed out, if you give the young people 2 percent of payroll and you promise the old folks the same money that the young people are taking out of the bank, you've got to come up with the money somewhere. Okay? That costs 1. Then the money they want to spend, it's about a half a trillion dollars—.5. Two trillion dollar surplus—2.

Here's the problem: 1.6 tax cut, 1 Social Security privatization, .5 spending equals 3.1. Three-point-one is bigger than 2. It doesn't add up, and it's going to take us back to deficits. We'll never pay the debt down; interest rates will be higher; the economy will be weaker.

Look, man, this affects everybody. This affects everybody. On a $100,000 home mortgage, the people paying on a $100,000 home mortgage are paying $2,000 a year less in payments because we turned deficits to surpluses, just on a home mortgage.

I've seen an economic study which indicates the Vice President's plan might keep interest rates one percent lower for a decade. Do you know what that's worth? Three hundred ninety billion dollars in lower home mortgages, $30 billion in lower car payments, $15 billion in lower college loan payments, lower credit card payments, lower business loans, more jobs, higher incomes, bigger stock market, stronger economy.

So, question number one—go out across this district and across this State and you tell them, "If you want to build on the prosperity and get America out of debt and take what's left for education and health care and a tax cut, you only have one choice: Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Mike Ross."

Now, the second question. Our country is not just better off; it's a better country. Crime is at a 26-year low, welfare at a 32-year low. We have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer drinking water, 3 times as many toxic waste dumps cleaned up in our 8 years as in there 12 years before, more land set aside than any administration since Teddy Roosevelt, 100 years ago.

We have 90 percent of our children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in history. We added 25 years to the life of Medicare, and the number of people without health insurance is going down for the first time in 12 years.

In our schools—all across America in our schools, math and reading and science scores are up; the dropout rate is down; the high school graduation is up. Last year, for the first time in the history of America, the African-American high school graduation rate was virtually equal to the white graduation rate. We have, in the last 3 years alone, a 300 percent increase in the number of African-American and Latino kids taking advanced placement classes and going to college, and the highest college-going rate ever, because we've given you the biggest increase in college aid since the GI bill 50 years ago.

Okay, question number two, do you want to build on this progress, or do you want to vote for somebody that will reverse the things we've done? You have a choice. Now look, this is something you can't see in those expensive TV ads. Let's just look at the facts here. Number one, if you vote for the Democrats, they will keep putting police on the streets. South Arkansas is full of law enforcement officers that were put there under our administration's program to keep driving the crime rate down.

Number two, we will keep putting teachers in the classroom and provide money to build and modernize and repair schools and for after-school programs and summer school programs and preschool programs. And we'll make the cost of college tuition tax deductible.

We will build on our clean air, clean water record, especially in the area of energy. And

the thing that will matter most to southeast Arkansas is this: We are funding research now, which Al Gore will double or more, trying to determine how to make farm-based fuel more efficiently. Most of you think of it as ethanol made from corn. But you can actually make fuel from rice hulls, from grass, from hay, from anything.

Here's the problem. It takes about 7 gallons of gasoline to make 8 gallons of ethanol. But we're doing research which is very promising that, when we're through, you'll be able to make 8 gallons of ethanol with one gallon of gasoline. That's like you all will be getting 500 miles to the gallon. It will change America forever. It will do a lot to solve the problem of global warming, and it will do a lot to raise farm income in Arkansas and everyplace else in the United States of America.

Now, in the area of health care—you heard Mike Ross say this—we're for a Patients' Bill of Rights; we're for Medicare prescription drugs for all the seniors who need it; and we want to expand coverage to children and to their families. That's the Gore plan. Now, you've got a choice. If you vote for them, they have committed—committed—and in the case of his opponent, often voted already—to get rid of the 100,000 police, get rid of the 100,000 teachers, no money for school construction, no money to expand health care coverage, a phony Patients' Bill of Rights that the HMO's will let them have, and a limited Medicare drug program because the big drug companies won't let them provide drugs to every senior that needs it.

You've got a choice. But if you want to keep building on the progress, if you want America to be safer, if you want the environment to be cleaner, if you want there to be more earnings in southeast Arkansas from a new energy future, if you want to expand health care coverage and, most important of all, if you want to make education better and make sure all of our children learn and all of our schools and everybody can afford to go to college—look, you just have one choice: Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Mike Ross.

Here's the third thing, and this is maybe the most important thing of all to me. If the good Lord came to me on this Sunday afternoon and said, "Bill, you can't finish your term; your life is over; you're history. I'll give you one wish. What would you wish for?" I wouldn't even wish for prosperity. I would wish for us to be a more united country.

Now look, I know it's hot, and I'm nearly done, but you've got to get this down because you've got to do the talking after I leave. What's the special thing about our economic expansion? It's not just the longest economic expansion in history. It's not just 22 million new jobs. This is the first time in 30 years when people at all income levels benefited. Yes, we had more billionaires and more millionaires. But we also had average income going up over $5,000; median income over $40,000 for the first time; 20-year low in poverty; 30 percent drop in child poverty; senior poverty below 10 percent for the first time in history; the welfare rolls cut in half.

Now, that's what's happened. Why? Because under our way of doing this, we all go forward together. That's why I wouldn't get rid of affirmative action when the Republicans wanted to do it, because I wanted us all to go forward together.

What does that mean? That means we Democrats, we're for things like the minimum wage and the hate crimes bill and equal pay for women and the defense of civil rights and human rights by our courts. That's what we're for. Now, if you want us to go forward together, you've got to be for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Mike Ross.

Now, let me just say one other thing about Mike Ross. I'm really proud of him. I've seen him grow up. I've seen him grow in the State Senate. I've seen him grow on this campaign trail. And I haven't seen any of these ads he was talking about. But I want you to know two things. I'll bet you anything there's some ad up somewhere where Mike's opponent is taking credit for all the money that Congress just came up with for two bridges across the Mississippi River. [*Laughter*] Is that right?

Well, I've got the Secretary of Transportation here as my witness. And I want you all to listen to this now. We've been working a long time for those bridges. But the Congress is in the control of Senator Lott from Mississippi and Tom Delay and Dick Armey from Texas, and they didn't want to give us that stuff. But we got those bridges, and we got $20 million for the Delta Commission, which will help this area. We got a lot of that stuff.

But I have to tell you what. You know why we got that money finally this year? Because

Mike Ross ran against the incumbent Congressman, and they're terrified he's going to lose. When those bridges get built, you ought to name them after Mike Ross. They ought to be the Mike Ross Memorial Bridges across the Mississippi River. Don't take my word for it. Ask Rodney. Ask Danny Davis—he's in the Congress. I know what I'm talking about. You put a plaque on those bridges when they get up, and you put Mike Ross's name on it. Now, I just want to say—I just couldn't resist it. [*Laughter*]

I want to say one other thing. This young man has a lot of energy; he will work hard; he will come home; he will serve his constituent faithfully. And that incumbent Congressman could not do a bit better than he will do. And if the Democrats win a majority, as most people think they will, then he'll be more effective at coming home and doing that. But there's a huge difference here. He will vote for you when he's in Washington, too. That is the difference.

And I'd like to say one final thing about Al Gore. You know, we've worked together for 8 years. He's done more good in the position of Vice President than any American in the history of this country. There's no question about that. Whether it is in managing the reduction of the size of Government to its smallest point since 1960 or managing our effort to hook up our classrooms to the Internet or trying to get higher mileage vehicles out of Detroit or dealing with a lot of our most sensitive foreign policy issues, he's experienced. He works like a dog. He works as hard as anybody I have ever known. And I don't care what anybody tells you; in the world we're living in, it matters whether you're willing to work hard. And he keeps learning, and he cares about these things.

Now, here's what I want to ask you to do. You can remember those three things I said, can't you? If you want to build on the prosperity, and you know that 3.1 is bigger than 2, and you want America to be out of debt with low interest rates and high growth, you've got to be for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Mike Ross.

If you want a Patients' Bill of Rights and Medicare drugs and funds to construct schools and hire teachers, if you want us to keep investing in new forms of fuel, if you want to keep moving forward with more police in little towns and rural areas in Arkansas, you only have one choice: Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Mike Ross.

If you want a policy where we're all going forward together, which is why we're for the minimum wage and equal pay and civil rights as one America, you only have one choice: Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Mike Ross.

Now, here's what I want to tell you: This race is tight as a tick—[*laughter*]—here, in this district, in this State, and all over this country. There's 12 or 15 States that are within 2 points, one way or the other. And I'll tell you who is going to win. Who is going to win is, who wants to go bad enough.

If you want Mike Ross to win badly enough, there's enough people right here to win this race for him. If you want Al Gore to carry Arkansas and you believe in what we've done and you're proud of what we've done the last 8 years, and you can't imagine why anybody would want to reverse these policies that are working instead of build on them, there's enough people right here in this room to carry the election.

Every one of you—every one of you has a ton of friends who have never come to a rally like this, don't you? You've got a lot of friends that have never heard a President speak or a Governor speak, and they're probably wondering what you're doing here on Sunday afternoon. You could be home watching football. Is that right?

So what I want you to promise yourself is, every free minute you've got between now and the time the polls close, you will call people and say, "Let me tell you why you ought to vote, let me tell you why you ought to vote for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Mike Ross." We've got to keep the prosperity going, not put it at risk; we've got to keep the progress going, not reverse it; we've got to keep going forward together as one country. If you will do that, Mike Ross and Al Gore and Joe Lieberman, they're going to have a big celebration Tuesday night, and our children will have a brighter future.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the Banquet Hall at the Pine Bluff Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to vocalist Carrie Paige; State Attorney General Mark Pryor; Lottie Shackelford, vice chair, and Carroll Willis, director, community service division, Democratic National Committee; Arkansas Secretary of State

Sharon Priest; State Representative Hank Wilkins; former Senators Dale Bumpers and David Pryor; and Mike Ross, candidate for Arkansas' Fourth Congressional District.

Remarks on Funding To Provide Debt Relief for Poor Nations
November 6, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. I'd like to welcome you all here to the White House, especially the distinguished members of the diplomatic corps who are here, and four of the Members of the United States Congress who helped to make this possible: Representative Spencer Bachus, Representative John Kasich, Representative John LaFalce, and Senator Paul Sarbanes. I thank you all for being here.

You know, in Washington, DC, if you get a group this diverse in the same room, you're normally there for a roast. [*Laughter*] Today, happily, it's a celebration.

Just a few moments ago, with the members of the administration who are here, I signed into law a bill to provide funding for the entire $435 million needed for the United States to do its share in debt relief this year for the world's poorest countries. It also gives the International Monetary Fund the authority it needs to do its share, as well.

I am so grateful for everyone here who made it possible, including Secretaries Summers and Albright, Gene Sperling, Sandy Berger, and the other members of the administration, representatives of the religious organizations, the NGO's, the business community, members of the diplomatic corps, and especially the Members of Congress who had the most astonishing bipartisan coalition for this endeavor.

I would like to thank one Member who is not here, Nancy Pelosi, for all the work she did on this as well. And I am sorry that Bobby Shriver, who also played a key role in this effort, could not be with us today because of his mother's illness, and I ask for your prayers for him and his family, and especially for his remarkable mother, Eunice, who has fought for so many good humanitarian causes in her long and rich life.

Our Nation is taking this important step today because we understand that making the global economy work for everyone is not a political nicety but an economic, strategic, and moral necessity. Open markets and open trade are critically important to lifting living standards and building shared prosperity. But they alone cannot carry the burden of lifting the poorest nations out of poverty. While the forces of globalization may be inexorable, its benefits are not, especially for countries that lack the most important building blocks of progress—a healthy population with broadbased literacy.

Here in our Nation, this will be remembered as a time of great plenty, but we cannot forget that for too many of the world—too many in the world, it is still a time of astonishing poverty. Nearly half the human race, 2.8 billion people, lives on less than $2 a day. In many countries, a child is 3 times more likely to die before the age of 5 than to go to secondary school. One in 10 children dies before his or her first birthday. One in three is malnourished. The average adult has only 3 years of schooling. This is not right, not necessary, and no longer acceptable.

I have committed our Nation during my service as President to wage an intensified battle against global poverty. I never accepted the idea that millions have to be left behind while the rest of us move ahead. The health of nations is not a zero-sum game. By lifting the weakest, poorest among us, we lift all the rest of us, as well.

I hope that this idea will be a priority in our foreign policy for a long time to come, no less important than promoting trade, investment and financial stability. It will be good for our economy because it represents an investment in future markets, good for our security because in the long run it is dangerously destabilizing to have half the world on the cutting edge of technology while the other half struggles on the bare edge of survival.

But most of all, as the religious leaders around the world have told us, and as those here will make clear again, it will be good for