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America needs to be able to buy a semiautomatic or an automatic weapon, built only for the purpose of killing people, in order to protect the right of Americans to hunt and to practice marksmanship and to be secure in their own homes and own a weapon to be secure. I just don't believe that.

So I hope that this is a debate that will continue. And I think, as I said, what Governor Florio did and what Governor Wilder did, I think will contribute to Americans facing this and trying to reconcile our absolute obligation under the Constitution to give people the right to handle a firearm responsibly and our obligation to try to preserve peace and keep these kids alive in our cities.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the center.

Remarks on National Service at Rutgers University in New Brunswick

March 1, 1993

Thank you, Nakia Tomlinson, for that fine introduction. I wish I could take you with me everywhere. We'd make a great duo there. Let's give her another hand. I thought she was great. [*Applause*]

I'd like to thank President Frank Lawrence—Francis Lawrence—for his fine speech. Does anybody call him Frank? I should have asked. [*Laughter*] I want to compliment Professor Benjamin Barber for his leadership and service here. And I want to thank all of you here in the Rutgers community for coming out for what I hope will be a truly historic moment in our Nation's history.

In addition to the people who have been introduced here, there are a host of mayors and members of the assembly and county officials here from your State. We have two former Governors, both of whom I served with, Brendan Byrne and Tom Kean, who are out there. I'm glad to see them, my friends. We have a distinguished array of Members of the House from New Jersey, Herb Klein, Bob Menendez, Frank Pallone, Donald Payne.

But you have some Members of the Congress from all over America here, and I want to introduce them, too, because they have taken a lot of trouble to come to Rutgers and because without them and without the people who represent you, the proposal I make today has no hope of passage. Many Members of the Congress for years have believed we ought to do more in national service, and some of them are here today.

I'd like to begin by introducing your Senator, Bill Bradley, who's behind me. I must say, when I walked into this arena, I turned around and asked Bill Bradley if he'd ever shot any baskets in here. I'd be intimidated to be the opposing team in here. Senator Bradley sponsored legislation to establish neighborhood corps and self-reliance scholarships, things that are forebears of the proposal I came to make.

I'd like to recognize the presence on the platform of Senator Ted Kennedy from Massachusetts who chairs the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education, which shepherded the pilot national and community service bill through the Congress in the last session, along with his counterpart who is out here in the audience somewhere. I'd like to ask him to stand up, the chairman of the House committee, Congressman Bill Ford, who came all the way from Michigan to be with us. Congressman, would you stand up.

I'd like to recognize in the audience the presence of Senator Chris Dodd from Connecticut, who was one of the first Peace Corps volunteers in the United States.

The Member of Congress who introduced many, many years ago the first piece of national service legislation ever introduced, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Claiborne Pell from Rhode Island is here.

I'd also like to introduce the only person in this audience, at least of our crowd, who doesn't have to look up to Senator Bradley, Senator Jay Rockefeller from West Virginia, an early VISTA volunteer in the United States.

And finally, I would like to recognize two other people, one a Member of the United States Senate and one a distinguished American citizen, the first boss of the Peace Corps,

Sargent Shriver, who's up here with me, and his deputy, Senator Harris Wofford, from Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Wofford, I'm glad to see you.

Now, I was involved before I became President in a group called the Democratic Leadership Council, and we made one of the central parts of our platform to reclaim a new majority of Americans for our party the establishment of a system of national service to help people to finance education. And one of our founding members and guiding lights is here, Representative Dave McCurdy from Oklahoma. I'd like for him to stand up.

Let me make this last point, if I might, by way of beginning. None of these things happen at the national level. We empower them to happen, and then people have to do things here at the grassroots. And I want to say a special word of thanks to your Governor for supporting the New Jersey Youth Corps and several other projects like it around the State, because if nobody's here to believe in this, it can't happen. And I thank Governor Florio for his support for these things.

I came here to ask all of you to join me in a great national adventure, for in the next few weeks I will ask the United States Congress to join me in creating a new system of voluntary national service, something that I believe in the next few years will change America forever and for the better.

My parents' generation won new dignity working their way out of the Great Depression through programs that provided them the opportunity to serve and to survive. Brave men and women in my own generation waged and won peaceful revolutions here at home for civil rights and human rights and began service around the world in the Peace Corps and here at home in VISTA.

Now, Americans of every generation face profound challenges in meeting the needs that have been neglected for too long in this country, from city streets plagued by crime and drugs, to classrooms where girls and boys must learn the skills they need for tomorrow, to hospital wards where patients need more care. All across America we have problems that demand our common attention.

For those who answer the call and meet these challenges, I propose that our country honor your service with new opportunities for education. National service will be America at its best, building community, offering opportunity, and rewarding responsibility. National service is a challenge for Americans from every background and walk of life, and it values something far more than money. National service is nothing less than the American way to change America.

It is rooted in the concept of community: the simple idea that none of us on our own will ever have as much to cherish about our own lives if we are out here all alone as we will if we work together; that somehow a society really is an organism in which the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts, and every one of us, no matter how many privileges with which we are born, can still be enriched by the contributions of the least of us; and that we will never fulfill our individual capacities until, as Americans, we can all be what God meant for us to be.

If that is so, if that is true, my fellow Americans, and if you believe it, it must therefore follow that each of us has an obligation to serve. For it is perfectly clear that all of us cannot be what we ought to be until those of us who can help others, and that is nearly all of us, are doing something to help others live up to their potential.

The concept of community and the idea of service are as old as our history. They began the moment America was literally invented. Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortune, and our sacred honor."

In the midst of the Civil War, President Lincoln signed into law two visionary programs that helped our people come together again and build America up. The Morrill Act helped States create new land grant colleges. This is a land grant university. The university in my home State was the first land grant college west of the Mississippi River. In these places, young people learn to make American agriculture and industry the best in the world. The legacy of the Morrill Act is not only our great colleges and universities like Rutgers but the American tradition that merit and not money should give people a chance for a higher education.

Mr. Lincoln also signed the Homestead Act that offered 100 acres of land for families who had the courage to settle the frontier and farm the wilderness. Its legacy is a nation that stretches from coast to coast. Now we must create a new legacy that gives a new generation of Americans the right and the power to explore the frontiers of science and technology and space. The frontiers of the limitations of our knowledge must be pushed back so that we can do what we need to do. And education is the way to do it, just as surely as it was more than 100 years ago.

Seven decades after the Civil War, in the midst of the Great Depression, President Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps, which gave 2½ million young people the opportunity to support themselves while working in disaster relief and maintaining forests, beaches, rivers, and parks. Its legacy is not only the restoration of our natural environment but the restoration of our national spirit. Along with the Works Products Administration, the WPA, the Civilian Conservation Corps symbolized Government's effort to provide a nation in depression with the opportunity to work, to build the American community through service. And all over America today you can see projects, even today in the 1990's, built by your parents or your grandparents with the WPA plaque on it, the CCC plaque on it, the idea that people should be asked to serve and rewarded for doing it.

In the midst of World War II, President Roosevelt proposed the GI bill of rights, which offered returning veterans the opportunity for education in respect to their service to our country in the war. Thanks to the GI bill, which became a living reality in President Truman's time, more than 8 million veterans got advanced education. And half a century later, the enduring legacy of the GI bill is the strongest economy in the world and the broadest, biggest middle class that any nation has ever enjoyed.

For many in my own generation, the summons to citizenship and service came on this day 32 years ago, when President Kennedy created the Peace Corps. With Sargent Shriver and Harris Wofford and other dedicated Americans, he enabled thousands of young men and women to serve on the leading edge of the new frontier, helping people all over the world to become what they ought to be, and bringing them the message by their very lives that America was a great country that stood for good values and human progress. At its height, the Peace Corps enrolled 16,000 young men and women. Its legacy is not simply good will and good works in countries all across the globe but a profound and lasting change in the way Americans think about their own country and the world.

Shortly after the Peace Corps, Congress, under President Johnson, created the Volunteers In Service To America. Senator Jay Rockefeller, whom I introduced a moment ago, and many thousands of other Americans went to the hills and hollows of poor places, like West Virginia and Arkansas and Mississippi, to lift up Americans through their service.

The lesson of our whole history is that honoring service and rewarding responsibility is the best investment America can make. And I have seen it today. Across this great land, through the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, which took the children who lived in the neighborhoods where the riots occurred and gave them a chance to get out into nature and to clean up their own neighborhoods and to lift themselves and their friends in the effort; in Boston with the City Year program; with all these programs represented here in this room today, the spirit of service is sweeping this country and giving us a chance to put the quilt of America together in a way that makes a strength out of diversity, that lifts us up out of our problems, and that keeps our people looking toward a better and brighter future.

National service recognizes a simple but powerful truth, that we make progress not by governmental action alone, but we do best when the people and their Government work at the grassroots in genuine partnership. The idea of national service permeates many other aspects of the programs I have sought to bring to America. The economic plan that I announced to Congress, for example, will offer every child the chance for a healthy start through immunization and basic health care and a head start. But still it depends on parents doing the best they can as parents

and children making the most of their opportunities.

The plan can help to rebuild our cities and our small communities through physical investments that will put people to work. But Americans still must work to restore the social fabric that has been torn in too many communities. Unless people know we can work together in our schools, in our offices, in our factories, unless they believe we can walk the streets safely together, and unless we do that together, governmental action alone is doomed to fail.

The national service plan I propose will be built on the same principles as the old GI bill. When people give something of invaluable merit to their country, they ought to be rewarded with the opportunity to further their education. National service will challenge our people to do the work that should and indeed must be done and cannot be done unless the American people voluntarily give themselves up to that work. It will invest in the future of every person who serves.

As we rekindle the spirit of national service, I know it won't disappoint many of the students here to know that we also have to reform the whole system of student loans. We should begin by making it easier for young people to pay back their student loans and enabling them to hold jobs that may accomplish much but pay little.

Today, when students borrow money for an education, the repayment plan they make is based largely on how much they have to repay, without regard to what the jobs they take themselves pay. It is a powerful incentive, therefore, for young college graduates to do just the reverse of what we might want them to do, to take a job that pays more even if it is less rewarding because that is the job that will make the repayment of the loans possible. It is also, unfortunately, a powerful incentive for some not to make the payments at all, which is unforgivable.

So what we seek to do is to enable the American students to borrow the money they need for college and pay it back as a small percentage of their own income over time. This is especially important after a decade in which the cost of a college education has gone up even more rapidly than the cost of health care, making a major contribution to one of the more disturbing statistics in America today, which is that the college dropout rate in this country is now 2½ times the high school dropout rate. We can do better than that through national service and adequate financing.

The present system is unacceptable, not only for students but for the taxpayers as well. It's complicated, and it's expensive. It costs the taxpayers of our country about $4 billion every year to finance the student loan program because of loan defaults and the cost of administering the program. And I believe we can do better.

Beyond reforming this system for financing higher education, the national service program more importantly will create new opportunities for Americans to work off outstanding loans or to build up credits for future education and training opportunities.

We'll ask young people all across this country, and some who aren't so young who want to further their college education, to serve in our schools as teachers or tutors in reading and mathematics. We'll ask you to help our police forces across the Nation, training members for a new police corps that will walk beats and work with neighborhoods and build the kind of community ties that will prevent crime from happening in the first place so that our police officers won't have to spend all their time chasing criminals.

We'll ask young people to work, to help control pollution and recycle waste, to paint darkened buildings and clean up neighborhoods, to work with senior citizens and combat homelessness and help children in trouble get out of it and build a better life.

And these are just a few of the things that you will be able to do, for most of the decisions about what you can do will be made by people like those in this room, people who run the programs represented by all of those wearing these different kinds of tee-shirts. We don't seek a national bureaucracy. I have spoken often about how we need to reinvent the Government to make it more efficient and less bureaucratic, to make it more responsive to people at the grassroots level, and I want national service to do just that. I want it to empower young people and their communities, not to empower yet another Gov-

ernment bureaucracy in Washington. This is going to be your programs at your levels with your people.

And as you well know, that's what's happening all across America today. People are already serving their neighbors in their neighborhoods. Just this morning, I was inspired to see and to speak with students from Rutgers serving their community, from mentoring young people as Big Sisters to helping older people learn new skills. I met a lady today who has 13 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren who dropped out of school the year before I was born, who's about to become a high school graduate shortly because of the efforts of this program. You back there? Stand up.

I'm impressed by the spirit behind the Rutgers Civic Education and Community Service Program, the understanding that community service enriches education, that students should not only take the lessons they learn in class out into the community but bring the lessons they learn in the community back into the classroom. In that spirit, during this academic year alone, more than 800 students from Rutgers are contributing more than 60,000 hours of community service in New Brunswick, in Camden, in Newark, throughout this State.

This morning I also met with members of the New Jersey Youth Corps—here they are; see them? Stand up—young people who are looking for a second chance at school and who, when coming back to finish their high school degrees, also serve in their communities. Through this program, more than 6,500 young adults have contributed over 900,000 hours of service to the State of New Jersey. They've done everything from paint senior citizens' homes to tutor and mentor children in after-school programs. For the future of our State and Nation, we need more young people like those in the New Jersey Youth Corps who exemplify the spirit of service.

That spirit also moves people all across the Nation. In my State, there's a young woman named Antoinette Jackson, who's a senior in a small community called Gould, Arkansas. She's a member of the Delta Service Corps. The rural Mississippi Delta is still the poorest place in America. And in that area, she works with a "lend-a-hand" program which runs a thrift shop to provide hungry and homeless people with food and clothing. And in return, the Delta Corps is going to help her attend college so that she can make an even greater contribution.

The spirit of service also moves a young man I met about a year ago named Stephen Spalos, who works with the City Year program in Boston. At age 23, he's had some hard times in his life. But as he puts it, City Year gave him a place and the tools to be able to start over. He works as a team leader, a mentor, a tutor, a project manager for a bunch of young people who restore senior citizens' homes. Last year when I visited his project, he literally took his sweatshirt off his back and gave it to me so that I would never forget the kids at City Year. And I still wear it when I go jogging, always remembering what they're doing in Boston to help those kids.

The spirit of service moves Orah Fireman, a graduate of Wesleyan College. As a sophomore in high school, she worked with disadvantaged children in upstate New York. That experience changed her life. And during her high school and college years, she continued to work with children. And now that she is out of college, she has begun what will probably be a lifetime of service by working at a school for emotionally disturbed children in Boston. She wants other people to have the opportunity to serve, and she wrote this: "Service work teaches responsibility and compassion. It fights alienation by proving to young people that they can make a difference. There is no lesson more important than that."

Well, there are stories like this in this room and all across America. And we're going to create thousands of more of them through national service. We'll work with groups with proven track records to serve their community, giving them the support they need. And if you have more good ideas, if you're entrepreneurs of national service, we'll let you compete for our form of venture capital, to develop new programs to serve your neighbors. That's how we want the national service program to grow every year, rewarding results, building on success, and bubbling up

from the grassroots energy and compassion and intellect of America.

I don't want service to wait while this potential is wasted. That's why I want to make this summer a summer of service when young people can not only serve their communities but build a foundation for a new national effort. I've asked Congress to invest in and I'm asking young people to participate in a special effort in national service and leadership training just this summer. We are going to recruit about 1,000 young people from every background, from high school dropouts to college graduates, to send to an intensive leadership training program for national service at the beginning of the summer.

Then we'll ask them to work on one of our country's most urgent problems, helping our children who are in danger of losing their God-given potential. Some of them will tutor. Some will work on programs to immunize young children from preventible childhood diseases. Some will help to develop and run recreational centers or reclaim urban parks from dealers and debris. Some will counsel people a few years younger than themselves to help keep them out of gangs and into good activities. And everyone will learn about serving our country and helping our communities.

At the end of this summer, we'll bring all these people together for several days of debriefing and training, and then they'll all join in a youth service summit. I will attend the meeting, and I expect to listen a lot more than I talk. I'll ask leaders from Congress, from business, labor, religious, and community groups to attend the youth service summit too. We'll give those who serve the honor they deserve, and we'll learn a lot more about how to build this national service program. And from the thousand pioneers of this summer, I want the national service to grow 100-fold in the next 4 years.

But even when hundreds of thousands are serving, I want to maintain the pioneer spirit of this first few months, because national service can make America new again. It can help solve our problems, educate our people, and build our communities back together. So if anybody here would like to be one of those 1,000 or if anybody who is listening to this speech by radio or television or reads about it would like to be one of those 1,000, drop me a card at the White House and just mark it "national service." We're going to pick them, and I can't promise you'll be selected, but I promise you'll be considered. I want to engage the energies of America in this effort.

I also want to say that you shouldn't wait for the summer or for a new program. We need to begin now. We are going to be looking for the kinds of ideas that we ought to be funding. This is Monday. I ask you by Friday, every one of you, to think about what you think you can do and what we should do to be agents of renewal; to talk with your parents, your clergy, your friends, your teachers; to join the effort to renew our community and to rebuild our country; and to write to me about what you are doing. It's time for millions of us to change our country block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood; time to return to our roots an excitement, an idealism, and an energy.

I have to tell you that there are some among us who do not believe that young Americans will answer a call to action, who believe that our people now measure their success merely in the accumulation of material things. They believe this call to service will go unanswered. But I believe they are dead wrong.

And so, especially to the young Americans here, I ask you to prove that those who doubt you are wrong about your generation. And today I ask all of you who are young in spirit, whether you are a 10-year-old in a service program in our schools who reads to still younger children or a 72-year-old who has become a foster grandparent, I ask you all to believe that you can contribute to your community and your country. And in so doing, you will find the best in yourself.

You will learn the lessons about your life that you might not ever learn any other way. You will learn again that each of us has the spark of potential to accomplish something truly and enduringly unique. You will experience the satisfaction of making a connection in a way with another person that you could

do in no other way. You will learn that the joy of mastering a new skill or discovering a new insight is exceeded only by the joy of helping someone else do the same thing. You will know the satisfaction of being valued not for what you own or what you earn or what position you hold but just because of what you have given to someone else. You will understand in personal ways the wisdom of the words spoken years ago by Martin Luther King, who said, ''Everybody can be great because everybody can serve.''

I ask you all, my fellow Americans, to support our proposal for national service and to live a proposal for national service, to learn the meaning of America at its best, and to recreate for others America at its best. We are not just another country. We have always been a special kind of community, linked by a web of rights and responsibilities and bound together not by bloodlines but by beliefs. At an age in time when people all across the world are being literally torn apart by racial hatreds, by ethnic hatreds, by religious divisions, we are a nation, with all of our problems, where people can come together across racial and religious lines and hold hands and work together not just to endure our differences but to celebrate them. I ask you to make America celebrate that again.

I ask you, in closing, to commit yourselves to this season of service because America needs it. We need every one of you to live up to the fullest of your potential, and we need you to reach those who are not here and who will never hear this talk and who will never have the future they could otherwise have if not for something that you could do. The great challenge of your generation is to prove that every person here in this great land can live up to the fullest of their God-given capacity. If we do it, the 21st century will be the American century. The American dream will be kept alive if you will today answer the call to service.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. at Rutgers University. In his remarks, he referred to Nakia Tomlinson, a student at Rutgers University, and Benjamin Barber, founder of the Rutgers Civic Education and Community Service Program.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With the Democratic Congressional Leadership

March 2, 1993

Spending Cuts

Q. Mr. President, we hear you're not going to ask for any more spending cuts. Is that right?

The President. Where did you hear that?

Q. Well, there's a little piece in the paper that says somebody on your staff admitted that, well, they didn't really think you'd be able to find any more spending cuts.

The President. Well, I expect there will be a lot more as we go along. I just don't think we should shut the Congress down while we all look for them. Keep in mind that we've got more than they've had in a long time, and we need to go forward with this program. But I think you'll see a continuous stream of them coming out as we go along.

Q. From you?

The President. From me and from others.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, are you satisfied with the airdrops in Bosnia, the success of the airdrops?

The President. Well, the last report I got this morning was pretty good, based on the last information I had. And I haven't talked directly to General Powell today, but he thinks they've gone pretty well, and I have to rely partly on—largely on his judgment.

Q. How long do you think they need to go on there?

The President. I don't have an answer to that now.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:19 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.