

Remarks Upon Arrival in Detroit, Michigan

August 6, 1994

Hello. Thank you for waiting while I visited with one of your fellow citizens over there and her two children. I want to just get out and shake hands, so I won't make a long speech. But I would like to say, first, be supportive of the new candidate for the United States Senate, Congressman Bob Carr, and our new candidate for Governor, former Congressman Howard Wolpe. I'm glad to be here with Congressman Dingell and Congressman Conyers and Senator Levin and with your State officials and a lot of my friends in Michigan.

I just want to make a comment or two. The lady to my left is Linda Clark. You may have read about her in the Michigan press, she and her two children. In 1993, her husband was killed in his business by five young people with previous criminal records. After he died, she received a \$24,000 bill from the hospital for his medical care, even though she didn't have health insurance. Since then, she has become a crusader for health care for all Americans and for a sensible policy on crime and, specifically, a supporter of our crime and health care initiatives. I read her letter again coming in today, and I asked her and her children to come here and be with me today because in Washington, very often what we do gets all caught up in partisan political rhetoric and name-calling and stuff that is very hard for ordinary citizens to understand. And I just want to make two or three points here today.

When I went to Washington as your President, I understood well that there would be forces there who would do anything, anything to fight change, to keep the established order of things, to stop us in our determination to give the American people their Government back again, to make it work for ordinary citizens, and to reawaken the American dream. But I want to ask you to look at the record, not the hype.

When I became President, the deficit was going up, and the economy was going down. By the narrowest of margins, we passed our national economic strategy. It cut \$255 billion worth of spending. It raised taxes on the

wealthiest 1.2 percent of Americans, and all their money went to pay down the deficit. It gave a tax break to 15 million American working families. In Michigan that means 392,000 families got a tax cut; 41,000 got a tax increase. Ninety-one percent of the American small businesses were made eligible for a tax cut. We shrunk the Federal Government to its smallest size since Kennedy was President, produced 3 years of deficit reduction in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was President, and you've got 4.1 million new jobs in the United States since our administration took office.

And since our administration took office, job growth in Michigan has been 3½ times what it was before. It is no wonder that the other party would rather not talk about economics or crime or health care and instead are interested in other things and division and always saying no. We did not have a single, solitary vote, not one, for that economic strategy from the opposition party. And I have done everything I could to reach out to people without regard to their party and ask for a bipartisan consensus to govern America.

You just remember that, folks, when Bob Carr is up here asking for your vote for the United States Senate. If it hadn't been for him, there would have been no deficit reduction, there would have been no economic recovery fueled by the first sensible economic plan we've had in more than 12 years. They want to go back; we're trying to go forward. And I appreciate your coming out here today saying you don't want to go back, you'd rather go forward, you'd rather create jobs, you'd rather grow the economy, you'd rather keep the American dream alive.

Now, let me just make two other points. There's hardly a family in America that has not been affected by crime. And the Congress has passed the toughest, smartest crime bill in history in each House, but they haven't passed the same bill. There are things in that bill that are controversial. There are people who don't support the capital punishment provisions of the bill. There are people who don't support the fact that the bill bans 19 assault weapons, which are so often used by criminal gangs, even though it protects 650 hunting and sporting weapons from being

banned. There are people who think we should not spend a lot of money on prevention programs to give our young people something to say yes to, instead of something to say no to. There are people who don't think it's important, but that crime bill gives 100,000 police to the streets of this country, a 20 percent increase. It makes our streets safer; it bans handgun ownership by minors; it has programs for safe schools; it has programs that will build more prisons and have "three strikes and you're out" for serious offenders and do more to help kids stay out of trouble. It is a good bill, and it should pass the United States Congress next week. We should stop fooling around with it. There are other families like Linda's family who deserve to have their streets safer and their futures better and brighter, and we ought to quit fooling around with it.

And finally, let me say something about health care. You know, I get tickled at all these people who say that this health care bill is some big Government socialist scheme, that it's some horrible idea to take over a big part of our economy.

Let me ask you something, folks. Here's a few questions, and I'd say the folks that aren't with us owe us some answers. Which country spends the most on health care? The United States. Which advanced country is the only one that doesn't provide health care coverage for everybody? The United States. Which is the only advanced country in the world where we're going in reverse, we're losing ground in health care coverage? The United States. Ten years ago, we had 88 percent of the people with insurance; now it's 83 percent. Today in America, there are 5 million, 5 million Americans, almost all of them working people and their children, who don't have insurance today who had it 5 years ago. Now, until we provide affordable private health insurance for all Americans, we are not going to be able to have a secure, stable family environment, work environment, offer people the chance to grow.

What do they say about this health care plan? They say it's bad for small business. Well, let me ask you this—this is an interesting thing—why, if it's bad for small business, have 600,000 small businesses signed up to support our plan to require everybody to

cover their employees and split the difference on the insurance premium? I'll tell you why, because most small businesses do provide health insurance to their employees, and they're getting ripped off today, they're paying too much for it.

I met a farm family from western Oklahoma a couple of days ago when I gave their daughter an award. She's a young teenager who had a car wreck in 1990, paralyzed her from the chest down. She's spent the last 4 years trying to encourage people not to drink and drive, not to ride with drunk drivers, and always to put their seatbelts on—a marvelous girl. But the story this family told me was interesting: a Republican farmer from western Oklahoma, his wife, and their two beautiful daughters, one confined to a wheelchair. They've had almost no medical bills in the last 2 years. But they just got notice that in August, their health insurance premiums are going from \$3,400 a year to \$9,600 a year. And they are going to have to drop their health insurance.

Now, this is not a partisan political issue. Anybody working that hard with two kids to educate, one of them with a serious illness—injury in the past, deserves affordable health insurance.

The only State that has ever provided health care to all its citizens is Hawaii. For 20 years, employers and employees have had to provide health care. And you know what? Insurance premiums in Hawaii are 30 percent lower than they are in the rest of the country.

We can do this. I am tired of people saying, we cannot do this, we cannot do that, we cannot do the other thing. The violent, extremist interests in this country that are trying to keep health care out of the reach of ordinary American working people are a disgrace to the American dream. Most of them have health care, and most of them have parents on Medicare. Why do they not want you to have the same thing that they have? Why? Why don't they want you to have what they can? Let them give up their health care and see how they like it.

Now, folks, we're going to have to make some tough decisions here. I don't mind being a controversial figure. You didn't invite me to go to Washington to sit in the White

House and warm the chair. We are changing this country. We are rebuilding the economy, we're taking on crime, we're taking on welfare reform, we're taking on health care, we're taking on the tough issues. But I cannot do it alone; you have to help. Support the Members of Congress. Tell them you want them to move on the crime bill. Tell them you want them to move on health care. Tell them a simple message: We are coming to the end of this century; we have got to keep the American dream alive. The only way to do it is to restore the economy, empower individuals to take advantage of it, and rebuild our communities and families.

Let's make Government work for ordinary citizens again. That's what I'm fighting for. Thank you for being here to help me make the fight.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

Remarks at a Democratic Reception in Detroit

August 6, 1994

Thank you very much. I'm glad to be back in Michigan and glad to be back in Detroit. I'm glad to be on this stage with all these wonderful Democrats, and I thank them for the work they have done for your State and for your country. I also would like to say a special word of thanks to all the people of Michigan who have been so kind to me and to Hillary and to our administration, for the victory we won here in the primary in 1992 and in the general election, and since then, for all the work that has been done, including the wonderful host we had in Detroit in Mayor Archer, when we had the jobs conference here a few months ago. I thank you for that.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ran for this job because I wanted to change this country. I was worried about the direction in which we were going. I thought the economy was going down, the deficit was going up, the country was coming apart, we were in danger of losing the American dream, and our Government wasn't working for ordinary people. I wanted to change all that. And after a year

and a half, I can tell you that the change is well underway.

A lot of people don't like it, and they've fought it every step of the way. When I try to unite people in Washington, there are always people there trying to divide us. When I try to talk in ordinary terms to ordinary people, there are always people there throwing around political hot air and divisive rhetoric. But I can tell you that we are moving forward.

Since this administration took office, we have implemented a national economic strategy. We have launched a full-scale assault on crime. We have made a sweeping proposal on welfare reform. We have got bills to the floor of both Houses of Congress for the first time in the history of the United States to provide affordable health care to all Americans.

And I want to point out, when I came to Michigan in 1992, people told me they wanted something done about this economy. When I offered our national economic plan to the Congress, I was told in a meeting by the congressional leaders of the other party that there would be no votes from the other party for the budget, no votes for the economic plan, that they would not help us to reverse 12 years of exploding deficits, declining investment, and a declining economy. And so, by the narrowest of margins, we passed that economic plan. And they said the sky would fall, the economy would collapse, the deficit would go up, jobs would be lost, the end of the world had come. Chicken Little was on the floor of the Senate and the House with an elephant pin on. [*Laughter*]

What happened? We produced for the American people \$255 billion in spending cuts, tax cuts for 15 million working families, including 392,000 working families in the State of Michigan. We did ask 1.2 percent of the wealthiest people in this country to pay more so we could pay the deficit down, including 41,000 families in Michigan, one-tenth the number who got a tax cut. We made 90 percent of the small businesses in this State and this Nation eligible for tax reductions if they invested more to grow this economy. We made 20 million Americans immediately eligible for lower interest rates