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in people the notion that you can't quit after high school. Even if you have to go out and go to work, you ought to be going to your community college while you're working.

And the last thing I want to say is we need to do something for the folks in the work force who lose their jobs, who are dramatically underemployed. For years and years and years, your Government, I think, has hung on to a job training system that doesn't work. There are 70 different Federal job training programs. You need a slide rule and a computer and a place on the Internet to figure out whether you're qualified for one of these 70 programs. It breaks your head just thinking about it.

What I'd like to see us do is to get rid of all these programs, create a big pot of money, and give people a skill grant when they lose their job or if they're underemployed, worth about $2,500 a year and say, you can spend up to 2,000 of this at a community college or getting an education and training; you can spend 500 searching for a new job. You decide how to spend it. The Government doesn't need a bureaucracy to tell you that the best place is a community college within driving distance of almost everybody in America.

And I want you to think about it. If we made it possible in America for every adult who is stuck in a difficult economic situation to go back to community college, if we said we will pay the tuition of every person who is starting in community college for up to 2 years, if we said, if you want to go to a 4-year school or to a graduate program we would give you a tax deduction for the cost of tuition, if we did those things, it wouldn't be long before we would see inequality diminishing, the American people growing together the way we did after World War II, because the single most important ingredient in opportunity for all responsible Americans is having access to an adequate education for the 21st century. That is a commitment I think we ought to make together.

And let me just say this as I close. I ask you to think about what you wanted your country to look like in the 21st century. I think about it in terms of what I want America to look like when my daughter is my age and has her own children. I believe this country can be greater than it is today. I believe our best days are ahead. I believe if we can find a way to deal with the security threats that face all civilized people around the world and our problems here at home and if we can create opportunity for everybody who is willing to be responsible and if we can come together across our differences in a stronger community, that the best days of this country are still ahead.

We can create opportunity for everybody who is responsible enough to work for it. We can build a stronger American community and revel in our diversity. We can maintain our leadership in the world. It all starts, however, with being committed to organize ourselves the way this community college is and being committed to giving every single American citizen the kind of opportunities that you celebrate here every day.

Keep up the good work; support it. This is not a partisan issue; it's America's future.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the Quadrangle. In his remarks, he referred to Tracy Tallent, graduate, and Tony Zeiss, president, Central Piedmont Community College; and Harvey Gantt, Democratic candidate, U.S. Senate.

Statement on Action To Eliminate Cigarette Vending Machines From A&P Stores

July 10, 1996

Every year hundreds of millions of packs of cigarettes are bought by children and adolescents. In a 1995 survey, more than 90 percent of 10th graders said it was "fairly easy" or "very easy" to obtain cigarettes. That is why my administration has proposed measures to reduce significantly the unlawful sale of tobacco products to young people.

I am pleased to commend the American business leaders who have also stepped up to the plate to tackle this problem. Today, Mr. James Wood, chairman and CEO of A&P, and the A&P board of directors have announced that they will remove all cigarette vending machines from their stores by the end of this month. In doing so, they have responded to the challenge and taken responsibility for a problem everyone—par-

ents, teachers, corporate leaders, community leaders, and clergy—must overcome together.

If more business leaders such as Mr. Wood and companies such as A&P took this type of decisive action and worked together with government, I am confident that we would achieve dramatic success on our efforts to keep cigarettes out of the hands of our children.

Remarks on the School Reconstruction Initiative

July 11, 1996

Thank you very much. I want to welcome Senator Moseley-Braun here, along with Senator Claiborne Pell, Senator Bob Graham, Congressman Ben Cardin, and Congressman Elijah Cummings. I thank them all for their concern for this issue and their leadership.

I think some of you know that I had originally planned to make this announcement in Senator Graham's home State in Florida, but Hurricane Bertha had other ideas. So before I get into the announcement, let me say that we are all watching the course of that storm. We pray that it doesn't cause extensive damage. The people of the Southeast know that we will be there to help them if it does. FEMA is now on the ground, and they are prepared. Our thoughts are with the people of the Southeast. And again, we're hoping for the best.

I'm here to announce a national commitment to rebuild our schools so that they can serve our children in the 21st century. Our Nation's mission must be to offer opportunity to all, to demand responsibility from all, and to come together as a community so that we can build better lives together. Our most basic expression of these values is perhaps the education we offer to our children.

We've worked hard to make our young people the best educated in the world as we enter the 21st century, putting in place a comprehensive strategy to renew our schools, to lift our standards at every level. We've expanded the Head Start preschool program. We've helped schools to help to set and to meet higher standards. We've also worked hard to develop higher standards and better training for our teachers. And we've created an important network of school-to-work programs for young people to be properly trained if they don't go on to 4-year institutions of higher education.

We're now on our way to connecting every classroom and library in the United States to the Internet by the year 2000. We're making our schools safer with the zero tolerance for guns in our schools and by encouraging and supporting communities to take their own initiatives, including school uniforms, imposing curfews, and stronger enforcement of the truancy laws. We're opening the doors of college wider than ever, through lower cost student loans, including better repayment terms; expanded Pell grant scholarships—Senator Pell, thank you for that; AmeriCorps; and our proposals to give families tax cuts to pay for higher education.

But all this progress is at risk if our children are asked to learn in a landscape that is littered with peeling paint and broken glass, if our teachers are asked to build up children in buildings that are falling down.

I remember the schools that I attended. They were pretty typical. Most of them were fairly old when I was there. They weren't fancy, but they were clean, they were well-maintained, they were treated with respect. They sent every student a clear message: You are important to us. We take your education seriously. That was how my parent's generation kept faith with us, and that is how we must keep faith with our children.

Now, Senator Moseley-Braun mentioned this report from the General Accounting Office. I want to hold it up again because I want to urge every Member of Congress, every Governor, every State legislator, every local school official, every school board member who cares about the condition of education and the future of education in our country to get a copy of this report and to read it. The report came out 3 weeks ago. It was requested by a number of Senators, and it confirms that we are not honoring this generational compact.

I want to thank here, before I go forward, the Members of the Senate and the House who have been interested in this, those who are here whom I've introduced and, espe-