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take responsibility to give our children the love and support they need and deserve, to show them by our own actions the meaning of right and wrong. If we do this, then I have great confidence in our country, our children, and our future.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 p.m. on September 27 at a private residence in Houston, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 28.

Remarks in Providence, Rhode Island

September 28, 1996

Good morning, Rhode Island! Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you for being here in such large numbers and with such great good spirits. You deserve these good spirits because our country is on the right track to the 21st century.

Mayor Cianci, thank you for that wonderful welcome and for your exuberant leadership. Under that leadership, as I saw when I drove into town today, Providence has become once again not only a truly historic city but a wonderfully beautiful one. It's an honor for me to be here in this great place.

Thank you, Secretary of State James Longevin, for being here, for being on this platform with me and for serving well and for embodying the proposition that every person in this country ought to have a chance to live up to his or her God-given capacities. Thank you for serving.

I want to thank the legislative leaders, Governor Sundlun, the other distinguished citizens of Rhode Island who are here. I want to say a special word of thanks to the people who provided our music, the Cranston High School West Marching Band, the Easterly High School—Westerly High School Jazz Band, and the Holy Cross Cathedral Church Gospel Choir. Thank you.

Thank you very, very much, Dawn Fayerwether. Thank you for standing up here as a living symbol of what our common efforts are all about: to build a bridge to the 21st century we can all walk across.

Thank you, Lieutenant Governor Bob Weygand, for running for Congress. We'll sure need you there as you saw over the last 2 years. And thank you, Patrick Kennedy, for serving with such energy and determination. You know, I thought I had energy until I met Patrick Kennedy. [*Laughter*] I don't know if he ever sleeps, but he certainly never stops working for the people of Rhode Island. And I thank him for what he has done.

Thank you, Senator Claiborne Pell and Mrs. Pell, for a lifetime of service to this State and to our Nation. Thank you not only for your dedication to education but also for your work for the cause of world peace and for all you have done to advance it. And finally, Senator, after so many years in which our national politics have become too mean, too personal, too divisive, and too full of hot air, it was a real honor for me to stand up here and watch you once again in positive, graceful, constructive tones set out what is best about our country, best about our Constitution, and best about public service. We wish you well, we love you, and we thank you.

And thank you, Jack Reed, also for a lifetime of service, beginning with your career at West Point, culminating now in your soon-to-be ascendance to the United States Senate, for representing the American dream. It's alive and well, and unlike some, you want it to be alive and well for everyone else as well. And we thank you for that. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am especially glad to be here in Rhode Island today and with Senator Pell to bring you some exciting news that occurred late last night. Last night we reached a broad bipartisan agreement on the budget for the Government next year. It is good for America because it continues to move us toward a balanced budget while protecting, not violating, our values.

It is especially exciting for me because the budget adopts my program to continue our advances in education. And it is a fitting tribute to Senator Claiborne Pell's last session of Congress because—and I don't think he knows this yet—the budget we agreed to last night contains the biggest increase in Pell grant scholarships in 20 years.

The budget will put 40,000 more young children in Head Start. The budget fully funds our commitment to the technological literacy initiative which will connect every classroom in every school in America to the

information superhighway by the year 2000. It protects our environment by funding clean air, clean water, and safe food. It recognizes that we are both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. It builds on our approach to combat illegal immigration at the borders, in the workplace, and in the criminal justice system, but it does so without hurting innocent children or punishing legal immigrants. Thank goodness we have turned that around.

It restores the antidrug funding I asked Congress to pass, including full funding of the safe and drug-free schools program, to give our children something to say yes to early in life so they don't get in trouble in the first place. I hope we have ended the ill-advised attempt to move away from that. Safe and drug-free schools, the D.A.R.E. program, people going into our schools, working with our kids: that's the way to go. And I'm proud that the Congress agreed last night.

It enacts the terrorism proposal I made last month—antiterrorism proposal—and puts into effect Vice President Gore's commission's recommendation on increased airport security measures, making air travel safer for all Americans and those who come here. It ends—and I hope for good—the attempts of Congress to stop our commitment to putting 100,000 more police officers on our streets. It continues the program until we finish the job of putting those 100,000 police out and making all of the streets of America safer for our children and their families to walk.

And in a marked departure from the congressional efforts of just several months ago, it not only reflects an abandonment of their attempts to repeal the ban on assault weapons, but it accepted my recommendation that we expand the Brady bill to say that now that we've taken guns away or prevented guns from going to 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers because of the Brady bill, it's time to extend that and say you shouldn't get a handgun if you beat up your spouse or your child either. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

In the last 3 months, as the American people have made it clear that they have no intention of seeing our country torn apart and divided over a radical agenda, we have restored a measure of bipartisanship and working together in Washington. Look what happens when you abandon extremism in favor of working together:

The Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform bill, making 25 million Americans eligible to keep their health insurance when they change jobs and say they can't be denied it if someone in their family gets sick.

A welfare reform bill that says we will continue our national commitment to health care and nutrition for poor families, we will spend more money on child care when people on welfare take jobs, but we will develop now a community-based system of dealing with poor families so that every community in this country can and must take responsibility for moving people from welfare checks to paychecks. It is a good thing for this country.

On October 1, just a few days away, 10 million Americans will get an increase in their minimum wage because of the minimum wage increase. And we have made every small business in the country eligible for a greater tax cut if they spend more money in their business. And in the same legislation, we made it easier for people in small businesses to take out pensions for themselves and their employees and for the employees of small businesses to take those pensions with them when they go from job to job. And in the same piece of legislation, there is a $5,000 tax credit for people who adopt children. There are so many children out there that need a home; I hope this will help them to find it.

And just a couple of days ago, I passed a piece of legislation which protects mothers and newborns from being thrown out of the hospital within a day after the children are born.

Ladies and gentlemen, the budget agreement we reached last night—make no mistake about it—yes, it reflects my priorities, but it was reached because it reflects your priorities. And you have been speaking loud and clear about what kind of America you want to go into the 21st century. It's a victory for your values. It's a victory for our country. Thank you so much for making yourselves heard.

This agreement proves that if we work together instead of pointing our fingers at one

another, we can do what we need to do. We can balance the budget, invest in our people, keep our streets safe, stay on the right track. We can produce results for the American people.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are a lot of things that are said in every election. But you know, when you get right down to it, the real issue is whether, after all is said and done, America produces more people like Dawn Fayerwether, or not. The real issue is whether we are working together to create the conditions and give ourselves the tools to make the most of our own lives, to build good work lives and good families and strong communities and a strong nation.

I heard Dawn telling her story. Right before I saw Dawn I met a person from Providence that I hope I've helped to make a little famous. Her name is Marilyn Concepcion, and she's standing over there. Stand up, Marilyn.

I saw—Marilyn spoke at the Democratic Convention to tell her story, but I hope I've helped to make her a little famous. I'm going to do this because I saw Senator Dole doing this the other day; I think it's all right. [*Laughter*] I wrote a book about what I thought was at stake in this country, in this election and going into the 21st century, called ''Between Hope And History.'' And I started the section on opportunity with Marilyn's story, from Providence, Rhode Island.

An immigrant from Puerto Rico, a high school dropout, a person who worked many jobs, a person who got involved in one of our AmeriCorps programs, City Year, one of the best programs in the country—and Rhode Island has just voted to go statewide with City Year—where young people are given a chance to work in their communities to solve problems, to help people, and in the process earn money to go back to school. And this young immigrant lady, an AmeriCorps graduate, a public servant in City Year, a high school dropout, is about to start—or just started her second year at Brown University, one of the finest institutions of higher education in America.

I believe we did the right thing to resist those efforts to cut the Pell grant program and instead expanded it. That means more Dawn Fayerwethers. And I believe we did the right thing to start AmeriCorps and then to stop them from doing away with it. It means more Marilyn Concepcions. That's what this election is all about. That's what this country is all about. That's what our future is all about.

This is not an accident, and this is not confined to a few people. Yesterday I was in the great and the very big State of Texas. And I was in Longview, Texas, a town of about 70,000 people, in the morning for a rally like this. There were lots of people there. After the rally I did as I customarily do, I walked down along the line there and shook hands with people. And within the course of 5 minutes I met the following people. I met a young 34-year-old woman, a single mother of two children, who went back later than most young people do and served in AmeriCorps and was using her money to go to the local junior college to start a life again so she could support her children.

And then I met a woman who was very emotional, who said to me, ''Mr. President, I'm so grateful that the family leave law was passed because my husband had cancer and I could spend some time with my husband and not lose my job.'' I think America's better because of that. I think we were right to pass the family leave law. And those who oppose it were not.

And then I met a man in a camouflage jacket, a military jacket, who was there with his wife and daughter in a wheelchair, who served our country with honor in Vietnam, who was exposed to Agent Orange, and as has happened too many times, his child had spina bifida, and she had had 12 operations. And in that bill which ended drive-by pregnancies, we also said at long last and too late, we're finally going to give some help to those people. They're qualifying for disability. They're qualifying for medical support. Their sacrifice should not be visited on their children, and if it is, we'll do our best to make it right. That's what this country is all about. That's what this country's all about, and that's what this choice is all about.

We have to decide some big questions. We all know how much the world is changing. Think how much the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the

world has changed in the last few years. And think how much it will change in the future. We know that it's going to change. The young people in this audience today, they'll be doing jobs, many of them, that haven't even been invented yet. Some of them will be doing work that has not been imagined yet.

Yesterday I had the great honor of welcoming home to Houston to the space program there, the Johnson Space Center, Shannon Lucid after her long, miraculous stay in space. When she was a young girl, she told someone she wanted to be a rocket scientist, and the adult said, there is no such thing, and if there were, it wouldn't be a woman. [*Laughter*] Well, today there are a lot of rocket scientists and a lot of them are women. And a lot of young girls were thrilled to see Shannon Lucid staying in space for 6 months.

And I can tell you that every time we go into space, we gain new knowledge that helps us here at home in preserving the environment and advancing the frontiers of medical science. Every time we do that, we push back the frontiers of human knowledge and create new opportunities for our people to make a living in ways that make the most of their God-given capacities.

So I say, I think we were right. President Kennedy was right to support the space program, and those who opposed it then were not right. I'm glad President Kennedy did that. And I'm proud to still be supporting the frontiers of America's exploration at home and in the heavens.

When you come down to it, there are a few big questions that we have to ask. And this is a truly historic period in our history. You have seen from the debates of the last 4 years two starkly different views of our future and what we should do as a people. And you have to decide, do we want to build a bridge to the future, or do we really believe we can build one to the past? I believe we have to build a bridge to the future; it is America's historic mission to always go into the future.

Do we believe—do we really believe that our money is wasted when we give a small portion of it to give Dawn Fayerwether a chance to get an education or Marilyn Concepcion a chance to work in City Year? Is our money wasted if we give a small portion of it to the Pell grants, to the Head Starts, to the preservation of our shared environment? Do we really believe you'd be better off if you were on your own, or don't you think the First Lady is right: It does take a village to raise a child and to build a country?

Folks, 4 years ago the people of Rhode Island were very good to me. But I asked you to take me on faith. You didn't really know. After all, I'd never been in Congress or the Senate, never worked in an administrative capacity in the Federal Government. I was just a Governor of a small State—you can identify with that. [*Laughter*] Some said a Governor of a small State had no business being President. But one thing you learn in a small place is that hot air doesn't get you very far because people find you out. [*Laughter*] And it seemed to me that it was time to stop the finger-pointing in Washington and start asking what can we do to roll up our sleeves and make this country a better place; how can we work together; how can we move forward?

Now you don't have to take it on faith. You've got some evidence. And I want to ask you in the next 38 days to talk to your friends and neighbors in this State and beyond the borders of this State about the evidence and the stakes for the future, because there's no guesswork now. I said I wanted to take this country into the next century with the American dream alive for every person who was responsible enough to work for it. I said I wanted our country to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I said that I believed we had to go into the 21st century as a stronger American community, respecting our diversity, not being torn apart by it as so many other places in this old troubled world are and that if we did those things—opportunity for all, responsibility from all, an American community in which all have a place—our best days were still ahead. The evidence is in. We are on the right track. Now you have to go out and convince the rest of the American people that that is exactly the case.

You know, compared to 4 years ago—just listen to this—we have 10½ million more jobs, the lowest unemployment in 7½ years. The unemployment rate in Rhode Island is

exactly half what it was when I became the President of the United States. Homeownership is at a 15-year high. The deficit has been cut by 60 percent and has gone down 4 years in a row for the first time since before the Civil War, in the 1840's. We are moving in the right direction.

A couple of days ago we got some news that really warmed the hearts of those of us who belong to our political party, because it showed that our prosperity after 20 years of stagnant wages and 20 years of increasing inequality in our country among hard-working people, that things are starting to change. Last year after inflation the typical family's income went up by $900, the biggest increase in a decade. Last year we had the biggest drop in child poverty in 20 years. Last year we had the biggest drop in the number of poor people in 27 years. And we had the biggest decrease—decrease—in the inequality of incomes of working families in 27 years. We are on the right track to the 21st century.

As the previous speakers have said, we have expanded educational opportunities. As the mayor noted, we have done what we could to work with local communities to bring the crime rate down. And the crime rate in America has gone down for 4 years in a row. There are almost 2 million fewer people on welfare. Child support collections have gone up almost 50 percent, by $3.8 billion. And that's one of the reasons people are moving off welfare, because parents are being required to assume responsibility for their children again.

The Family and Medical Leave Act not only helped that lady in Longview, Texas, who talked to me yesterday, 12 million times American families have been able to take a little time off from work when a baby was born or a child or a parent was sick without losing their jobs. And it's been good for our economy. I'd like to see it expanded so that families can take some time off to go to regular parent-teacher conferences and regular doctors appointments with their children or their parents.

I want to see a country where people can succeed at home and at work. One of the biggest challenges facing us today is that the American people are working harder than ever before and almost every parent of any income group can cite a few examples in life when they were afraid that the demands of their work took away from the responsibilities of their parenthood. There is no more important job than raising our children. We have to keep a strong economy. That's what things like the Family and Medical Leave Act are for. We have a more productive economy when people are not worried sick about their children while they're at work. That is the kind of America I am trying to build.

Now, I think we also have to face the fact that we've got to build on—we have to build on the pioneering work of Claiborne Pell to keep America's educational opportunities and standards and performance up to the finest in the world. And there are two things I'd like to emphasize in particular. Forty percent of the children in this country who are in the third grade still can't read a book on their own. It's going to be very hard for them to master the demands of the information age if that's so. I want to mobilize an army of AmeriCorps volunteers, reading specialists, senior citizens to go in and work with parents and work with schools to make sure that by the year 2000 every 8-year-old in this country can pick up a book and say, "I can read this all by myself."

When we finish the work of hooking up all of our classrooms to the information superhighway—for those of you who aren't computer geniuses like our children are, but I'm not, let me explain in plain language what that means. It means not only computers and educational materials and the computers and teachers trained to work so that they're not letting the kids get ahead of them on the computers, it means something else. When you hook all these computers into the Internet, into the World Wide Web, into these other information networks, what that means is that for the first time in the entire history of the United States the children in the poorest inner-city schools, the children in the most remote rural schools will have access to the same information at the same level of quality in the same time as the children in the wealthiest and best public and private schools in the United States. It has never happened before. We can do it now, and we must do it now.

And I want, finally, to make sure that we have literally opened the doors of college education to every person in this America who is willing to work for that, without regard to their income. And I have three specific proposals to add to what we're doing.

Number one, I think more Americans should be able to save in an IRA, but withdraw from that retirement account without tax consequences if they're going to pay for a college education, a health care emergency, buying a home.

Number two, I believe that we should give people like Dawn literally the cost of at least a community college education so that we can say by the year 2000, we have made 2 years of education after high school just as universal as a high school diploma is today. And it will be easy to do. It would be easy to do.

I propose a tax credit which would let people take from their income taxes, dollar-for-dollar, the cost of the typical community college tuition in America. It will be a wonderful thing. We can overnight say the community college system is accessible to all of you. And it will pay us back, and we can pay for it. And finally, I think we ought to make up to $10,000 a year of college tuition deductible for any kind of higher education, 4-year colleges, medical school, veterinary school, you name it. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [*Applause*]

We need to build a bridge to the 21st century that continues our work to prove that we can clean up our environment and grow our economy. There are still some people who don't believe that. But let me tell you, there are still 10 million children growing up within 4 miles of toxic waste dumps. If you'll give us 4 more years, we'll clean up the 500 worst dumps so that we can say, our children, they're growing up next to parks, not poison. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [*Applause*]

Finally, let me say we've got to keep this economy going, growing, and strong. That means we do need to balance the budget, because that keeps interest rates down, that keeps your home mortgage, your car payments, your student loan payments, your credit card payments down. It keeps the interest rates on business loans down so more people can borrow money to grow new businesses and hire new people.

But we cannot do it in a way that violates our values and tears us apart as a country. We do not need to destroy the Medicare program in order to save it and balance the budget, and I don't intend to let it happen. We do not need to revoke our historic guarantee of health care coverage to poor mothers and their little children, to the elderly who are in nursing homes, whose children are often middle class workers who would be poor if it weren't for Medicare helping their parents. And we must not do it to families who have family members who have disabilities. That keeps them in the middle class and gives their family members the dignity of decent health care without driving the families into poverty.

We cannot do it by cutting back on education or the environment or on research. Here we are celebrating the space program. You clapped for that. There's more on the way. We have doubled the life expectancy of people with HIV in just 4 years because of medical research and the rapid movement of drugs into the marketplace.

Many of you were very moved by Christopher Reeve's speech at the Democratic Convention calling for more research dealing with spinal cord injuries and other medical problems. Let me tell you, just a few days before he gave that speech, for the first time ever, a laboratory animal with a completely severed spine showed movement in its lower limbs because of nerve transplants into that spine. No telling what we can do if we keep pushing back the frontiers of knowledge. We cannot walk away from the future.

So there it is. You have the evidence. You have 4 years of proof that we're on the right track; that saying we're building a bridge to the future, saying it takes a village, saying that community and opportunity and responsibility are the right way to go. You have a world of evidence around the world, where countries are being torn apart when they don't get along with each other, when they discriminate against people based on their race or their gender of their ethnicity or their tribal group or their religious convictions. This country is in the best shape of any nation in the world to go into that next century, and

our best days are still ahead if we vote on November 5th to build a bridge to the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. at Station Park. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., of Providence; former Gov. Bruce Sundlun; Dawn Fayerwether, student, Community College of Rhode Island; Senator Claiborne Pell's wife, Nuala; and senatorial candidate Jack Reed.

Remarks in Fall River, Massachusetts

September 28, 1996

The President. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Hello, Fall River! Mr. Mayor, thank you for making me feel so welcome. Senator Kennedy pointed out I have been all over the world. This is my first trip here. If I had know what I was missing, I'd have been here sooner, I can tell you that. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Are there any Portuguese-Americans here? [*Applause*] *Obrigado* [*Thank you*], Fall River. I'm glad to be here. I'm delighted to be here with all of you. I thank Joan Menard for starting us off and for the good work she has done. I want to thank Jim McGovern for presenting himself as a candidate for Congress, and I hope you'll make him a Congressman. He'd be a good one. I want to thank my good friend Congressman Barney Frank who's here, who used to represent you in the legislature. Thank you, Barney. And I want to thank his sister, Ann Lewis, who is the spokesperson for my Presidential campaign. You may have seen her on television taking up for me. She's going to wind up getting her name recognition up as high as her brother's, and that's a pretty good thing. And I want to thank their proud mother, Elsie Frank, who is here somewhere today. I saw her. Thank you, dear. I am delighted to be here with all of you. But I want to say a special word of thanks, as an old musician, to Our Lady of Light Band and the Mike Moran Band. Thank you both for providing the music for us.

Thank you, Senator Ted Kennedy. And Vicki, thank you for being here. You know, I wish I had as much energy as Ted Kennedy does. I just left Providence, where I was with Congressman Patrick Kennedy, and he was the bounciest person on that stage. Ladies and gentlemen, you cannot imagine the phenomenal impact that Ted Kennedy had on this Congress. After they passed their radical budget and I vetoed it and you made clear—you and people like you all across America, in all 50 States, Democrats, Republicans, and independents, too—that you basically agreed with me and us and not them, it was just amazing what Ted Kennedy was able to do in this Congress.

The Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform bill will make 25 million Americans eligible to keep their health insurance when they change jobs and say they can't lose it if somebody in their family gets sick—25 million. And this Congress, which just a year ago was out there trying to raise income taxes on the lowest income working American families, trying to lower the income of the working people with the lowest incomes in the country—thanks to the leadership of Ted Kennedy, on October 1st, which I think is Tuesday, 10 million Americans will get a pay raise when their minimum wage goes up. Thank you, Senator, thank you.

And I might add that bill will also make it easier for people in small businesses to take out retirement plans and for employees in small businesses to keep those retirement plans when they move from business to business. So it's good for workers and good for business. It also has a $5,000 tax credit for families who adopt children who need a home, and I hope more of them will get a home now. Thank you for that bill. It's a good bill for America.

I'm delighted to be here with my friend Senator John Kerry and with Teresa. And I want to tell you, folks, I know that John Kerry has a vigorous and spirited race. But every one of you here in Fall River knows what's really at stake. We're going through a period of great change in this country in how we work, how we live, how we relate to the rest of the world, what it will take for us to see that every American lives up to the fullest of his or her God-given potential.