

of Colorado, general chair, Leonard Barrack, national finance chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair-designate, and Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Massachusetts State Democratic Party Chair Joan M. Menard; and Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston.

**Remarks to the Community at
Jackson Mann Elementary School
in Allston, Massachusetts**

February 2, 1999

Thank you so much. First, I would like to thank all those who have joined us today. Governor, thank you for your remarks and your commitment. To Senator Kennedy and Senator Kerry, to Congressman Moakley and Congressman McGovern, and the other members of the Massachusetts delegation, I couldn't ask for stronger supporters and leaders for the cause of education.

Mayor, thank you for setting an example which I hope will be followed by every mayor in the country in terms of your commitment to education. I want to congratulate Boston on stealing your superintendent, Tom Payzant, from the Department of Education and my administration. [*Laughter*] I forgive you for that. [*Laughter*] You have given a lot more to me than you have taken, and it is a gift to the children of this city.

I'd like to thank Dr. Joanne Collins Russell and Gail Zimmerman and the faculty and the students, the chorus here at Jackson Mann, all of you, for making us feel so at home. Thank you so much. I want to thank the legislators and the local officials, the others who are here.

I'm glad to be here. I heard a lot about this school. Tom Menino told me the last time he was here that you gave him pasta. [*Laughter*] So I didn't eat lunch at the last event—[*laughter*]—just waiting. That's not true, but it's a good story. He liked the pasta. [*Laughter*] It is true that he got pasta; it's not true I didn't eat lunch. [*Laughter*]

But I also want to say to all of you, I was terribly impressed by what everyone said but most impressed by what your principal and what your teacher said, because it convinced me that this is a school which is going to be able to do right by the children of 21st

century America. And every now and then, while I'm going through this talk and tell you what I'm going to propose to Congress, just look up there—there they are; that's America's future. That looks pretty good to me, but it is very different than our past.

When I spoke at the State of the Union last month—to tell the American people that the state of our Union is strong, that our economy is perhaps the strongest it has ever been—I asked the American people to reflect upon what our obligations are in the midst of this economic success, with the social successes we've had, the welfare rolls cut almost in half, the lowest crime rate in a generation. What are we going to do with this?

And I asked the American people to join together to meet the great challenges of a new century—things like the aging of America, helping families balance work and child rearing, helping communities and States and our entire country balance the need to grow the economy with the need to preserve the quality of life and the quality of our environment—big challenges.

There is no challenge larger than giving every child in this country a world-class education, for every child will be not only a citizen of the United States but a citizen of the world. If you look at these children up here, you won't be surprised to know that all over America we not only have the largest group of schoolchildren in history, it is the most racially, ethnically, religiously, culturally diverse group in history.

Now, as the world grows smaller and our contacts with people all over the world on every continent become more frequent and more profound, there is no country in the world better positioned to preserve liberty and prosperity and to be a beacon of hope than the United States. Because as we look more like the world, we will have more advantages to have a positive influence in the world—if, but only if, we prove that we really can build a successful multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural democracy where we say we cherish, we enjoy, we celebrate our diversity, but what we have in common is more important.

And the challenge of this and every school is to make sure that all of our children understand and are proud of what is different

about them but also understand and are proud of what they have in common. And understand that all children can learn and all children must learn, and that it will be more important to their generation than to any previous generation of Americans.

The results you're getting here on your test scores, and just the feeling that one gets here in listening to what your principal and your teacher said, make me know that you are on the right track. I was so impressed with Ms. Zimmerman, when she got through, I said, "You did a good job. You ought to run for public office." [Laughter] And she said, "Well, I might." [Laughter] I hope she'll teach a few more classes of kids with that kind of skill and understanding, first.

There are lots of schools—over the last 20 years, Secretary Riley and I used to be Governors together, and I've spent a lot of time in public schools over the last 20 years—a lot of time, a lot of time as President. And this is actually unusual for me, just to come to the meeting like this. Normally when I come to a school, I also visit a class and talk to the teachers and talk to the students and listen and observe.

And one of the things that I want the American people who aren't here to know and understand is that every single problem in American education has been solved by someone somewhere. And that many of these problems have been solved in schools where, if you didn't know anything about education, you could hardly believe it. Sometimes they're in the toughest neighborhoods; sometimes they have the most limited financial base. But with good principals, good teachers, a good culture in the school, high values, high standards, it is astonishing what I have seen in places where you wouldn't believe it.

The great trick and difficulty in American education is, and the thing that we have not solved, we have not yet figured out how we can accelerate the pace by which all schools do what works in some schools. And I think every teacher here, everyone who has ever been across the country or across the State or maybe even across the city and had experience from school to school would say that that is sort of the nagging challenge.

Part of it, of course, is that all schools are different, all kids are different, all classes are different, all circumstances are different. Part of it is that there are internal resistances to doing what the mayor is now trying to do citywide and the Governor is now trying to do statewide.

That's why this year, our continuing effort to promote educational excellence will be of special importance, because this year we're going to try to do something the National Government has never done before. Every 5 years, we have a great debate in Congress on how we should spend the Federal contribution to our public schools. What are the terms under which the States and the school districts get this money. It is called a reauthorization act, and we're going to have that debate this year.

This year, I am going to ask the Congress, for the first time, to invest more money than ever before in our schools but to invest only in what the schools and the teachers and the parents have told us works and to stop investing in what doesn't work. [Applause] Now, I don't think we should subsidize inadequate performance; I think we should reward results. And sure enough, more people will follow the lead of schools like this one, if it happens.

Now, this may seem self-evident. You all clapped. Believe me, this will be very controversial. After all, there are some people in Congress who don't believe we have any business investing in more—more in public education, because it is a State constitutional function, and in every State most of the money is raised either at the local level or at the State level, but only nationwide about 7 percent of the money comes from the national level. But it's a lot of money. I mean, \$15 billion—\$15 billion is not chump change. It's real money, and it can make a real difference.

There's more than ever before. Last year we got bipartisan agreement in Congress, after a big debate, to make a big downpayment on 100,000 more teachers in the early grades to help you deal with the problem of more teachers retiring as more kids come in. And the plain evidence is that smaller classes in the early grades make a special difference.

We did not pass last year—I hope we will this year—my proposal to build or modernize 5,000 schools, through the use of the tax credit. Now, we actually have—Boston is the first city with all the schools hooked up to the Internet, you heard the mayor say that. I hate to tell you this: We have some cities where the school buildings are in such bad shape they are not capable of being hooked up to the Internet. And I have been in school districts from Virginia to Florida to California where there are so many kids that the outside is littered with house trailers where they're going to school.

So this is a big challenge. There are some who don't think we should be doing that. They think that's somebody else's job. But there's an even deeper debate you will see this year about more than money. Some people argue that even though we spend \$15 billion a year on public education, the National Government has no business whatever holding the system accountable for results. They say, if we say we're going to hold districts accountable for results, that we're trying to micromanage the schools.

Nothing could be further from the truth. If I have learned one single, solitary thing in 20 years of going into schools, it is that if you have a good principal and a good attitude among the faculty and a decent relationship with the parents, you're going to have a successful school. You're doing the right things. I've learned that.

So you will not find anybody who is more reluctant to micromanage the schools than me. But keep in mind what I said—and you ask the teachers when I'm gone if this is not true—every problem in American education has been solved by somebody somewhere. The problem is we are not very good at spreading what works to all the rest of the schools in a timely and efficient manner.

Therefore, what I propose to do is to write into the law what teachers and other educators have said to me are the critical elements of dealing with the challenges of this generation of young people, and the dramatic income and other differences we see from school district to school district, and say: If you want the money, you should do this—not should—you must do this.

This will be very controversial. But I'm telling you, I have been frustrated for 20 years in trying it the other way. We had some school districts in my State that had done things that achieved national acclaim, and I put in a bill—and I passed it—to create a pot of money to pay the expenses of educators from other school districts in my State to go to these school districts to see what was going on, and a majority of them wouldn't do it when I offered to pay their way. We should have—it wasn't because they weren't dedicated. It was just sort of, "Oh, well, you know, we do it our way. They do it their way."

And I believe that this is a very, very important debate. And I came here because I approve of what you're doing in this school, and I'm proud of it. I came here because I'm proud of what the mayor is doing. I'm proud here because of Massachusetts' historic commitment to excellence in education. I came here because your congressional delegation is as devoted to excellence in education as any in the land. That's why I'm here—to say that every place should be like this, and that we can help. And I hope you will support that.

Can you imagine any company spending \$15 billion and saying, "Here, take the money. We don't care what the results are. And come back next year, and I'll write you another check." [*Laughter*] I don't think any child in America should be passed from grade to grade without knowing the material. I don't think we're doing children a favor. I don't think any child should be trapped in a failing school without a strategy to turn the school around or give the kid a way out. And I believe these should be national priorities, not to tell people how to do this but to say that you must have a strategy to do it, that you implement, that produces results. You decide how to do it.

From now on, I think we should say to States and to school districts, "Identify your worst-performing, least-improving schools, turn them around, or shut them down." There's \$200 million in my budget to help school districts do that—\$200 million. And we can do this. I'll talk more about it in a minute; I'll give you some evidence of that.

If we fail to do it, how many kids are we going to lose to low expectations? And every one of them can learn. You know it, and I know it. If we succeed, our best years lie ahead. Their years will be America's best years.

I'll tell you, I've listened to this debate for two decades now, and half the time, when I hear people say we can't do something, what they're really saying is, "Those kids are different from my kids, and I don't really believe they can learn." Well, that is not true. All of our children can learn, and I intend to see that they do.

We're working to help every city follow Boston's lead and be hooked up to the Internet by early in the next century. We're working to expand Head Start. We're working to bring more tutors to elementary schools to help work with the teachers to help make sure our kids can read. And it's very important, when their first language is not English, to give more and more help in the schools. We're working to send college students as mentors into middle schools and high schools, where hardly any kids go to college, and convince all kids they can go to college.

If you look at the scholarships, the loans, the Pell grants, the tax cuts, the work-study programs that this Congress has approved in the last 4 years, there's no excuse for anybody not going to college because of the money. You can afford to go now. We have put the money out there. And every 11- and 12- and 13-year-old kid in America needs to know this. They need to know that they can make their own future.

I know that some of our America Reads tutors are working at Jackson Mann and several AmeriCorps City Year members are working here too, and I want to thank them. Boston University AmeriCorps, thank you. And I want to get back to the point here. Our schools are doing better all over the country. Almost all the scores are up. The math scores are up. The SAT scores are up. But we have two big challenges, and I want you to focus on them.

Number one, reading scores have hardly budged. Now, that should not surprise you because our school population every year has a higher and higher percentage of immigrant children whose first language is not English.

So it's harder just to stay in place, but it's not good enough, because these children are still going to have to go out into a world where they'll either be able to read and learn and think and reason in this country's main language, or they won't. So we have to do better.

Something that bothers me even more is that these international comparative scores in math and science—this is fascinating—American children, a representative group by race, by income, and by reason rank at the top of the world in the international math and science scores in the fourth grade. You know, they're always first or second or third, last couple of years. They drop to the middle by the time they're in the eighth grade. By the time they're in the 12th grade, they rank near the bottom.

Now, you can't say that the kids can't learn, otherwise, they never would have been at the top, right? So that means that we have to do some things in our system to make sure that their fast start speeds up, not slows down. There could be no more compelling evidence that our children can learn.

So in this year's budget—I'll say again—I not only want to finish hiring the 100,000 teachers, take another big step there, and fix the 5,000 schools and keep hooking up to the Internet, and also give you something to find on the Internet—we're going to set up a digital library with hundreds of thousands of books that schools can access—so every school library in America, literally, within a few years, every school library in America can have 400,000 books if the digital library works.

We also want to pass this bill that says, "Okay, here's the Federal money. But here's what you have to do if you want to get it. First of all, you have to identify the worst-performing, least-improving schools and take responsibility for turning them around," just like the mayor is and the school people are here in Boston—Mr. Payzant is working on that. That's what you've got to do. Why is that? Because we've got to insist that the schools, no matter how difficult their circumstances, offer world-class education.

Now, under our plan, States and school districts would audit failing schools for educational weaknesses, find resources that

would help, do what Ms. Zimmerman does on her own: Go out and help the mentor teachers; make sure that all the teachers have been given the best development possible; provide reading tutors if they're needed; provide other kinds of help to get more parents involved; do whatever is necessary.

Then, if after 2 years the student achievement still doesn't improve, States and districts would have to take stronger action, including permitting students to attend other schools if they and their parents want to do so. Or reconstituting the school, making staff changes as appropriate. Or maybe even closing the school and reopening it, completely differently constructed.

Now, this can work. Let me just give you two examples. Six years ago Houston listed 68 of its schools as low performers. Today, after much aggressive intervention and hard work, the vast majority of those are off the list, because they're getting different results, not because they're trying harder but because they changed their results.

Dade County, Florida—that's Miami—one of the most diverse school districts in America, had 45 critical, low-performing schools. They raised their math and science scores so much—math and reading scores so much now that within 2 years, all 45 were off the list, just by focusing on it and by refusing to accept the proposition that, just because these kids were having a tough time financially or they live in tough neighborhoods, that their schools couldn't function, and they couldn't learn.

Now, this is what Boston is committed to doing, but this is what every place in America should do. And in our budget, we have \$200 million to help them do it. We also call for ending social promotion, but we say—and I want to reiterate that—it's not the students who are failing; it's the system's failing them. So you don't want to punish the students; you want to change the system.

Therefore, among other things in this budget, we call for tripling the funds available for after-school and summer school programs to help kids learn more. In 3 years—listen to this—3 years ago, Congress appropriated \$1 million for the Federal contribution to after-school programs. Then, the year before last, it was 40; then last year it was

200; and this year I hope it's going to be 600; and we'll have a million more children in every State in this country off the streets, in the classroom, learning more, and having a better future.

We also have to give more support for teachers, more support for teacher development, more support for teacher education, more understanding of what's involved here. You have 53 million people, and you're going to have a couple of—according to Secretary Riley, a couple of million more teachers retire in the next few years.

It should not—let me just say something. One of the big reasons that the test scores go down in math and science is that the teacher shortage has been so profound that there are a huge number of our teachers in America today in our junior and senior high schools, our middle schools and high schools, teaching courses in which they didn't have a college major or even a minor, because there was no one else available to teach them.

And we have to do more to support the recruitment and the support and the continuing teacher development of those people. One of the things in this budget that I think is particularly important, even though it's not a big number, is that we have funds for 7,000 college scholarships for young people where we pay their way to college in return for their commitment to teach for 4 years in an inner-city school or some other place where there's a serious teacher shortage of trained teachers. This is a big deal. It can make a significant difference.

I also believe that all parents should get report cards on all schools. That has worked. The Boston schools are doing it. It ought to be done everywhere. People are entitled to information. Most towns in this country, you can find out more about the local restaurants than you can about the local schools, if you're a parent, unless you just go there and hang around. I mean, it's important.

And finally, interestingly enough, you know what the teachers' organizations and teachers at the grassroots asked us to do, to put into this bill? They said, "We should say that every school district should have a reasonable, comprehensive discipline code that is actually implemented." Teachers asked for that, and I think that's important.

So again I say, look at those kids. Think about what you want America to be like in 20 years. Think about what we're going to do with this golden moment for our economy, with this first budget surplus we've had in 30 years. There's a lot of things we need to do, but nothing is more important than giving our children a world-class education—nothing. And I hope you will support it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:45 p.m. in the auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Argeo Paul Cellucci of Massachusetts; Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston; Joanne Collins Russell, principal, and Gail Zimmerman, teacher, Jackson Mann Elementary School.

Statement on the Death of Paul Mellon

February 2, 1999

Hillary and I are saddened by the death of Paul Mellon, one of America's most dedicated philanthropists. His generosity over a long lifetime invigorated and sustained our Nation's cultural and educational institutions. Carrying on his family's work, he donated a remarkable collection of priceless art to the National Gallery of Art, so that it could be enjoyed by future generations. He gave the Nation the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and led the restoration of Lafayette Park, across the street from the White House. He received the National Medal of the Arts and the National Medal for the Humanities, but his true recognition comes from the millions of people whose love of art his gifts inspired. His legacy of commitment to public service is, itself, priceless. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Bunny, his children, Catherine and Timothy, and his grandchildren.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

February 2, 1999

Dear _____:

I transmit herewith the report required under the heading "International Organiza-

tions and Programs" in title IV of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1996 (Public Law 104-107), relating to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The attached report covers the period through December 1998.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Emigration Policies and Trade Status of Albania

February 2, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Albania. The report indicates continued Albanian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration. In fact, Albania has imposed no emigration restrictions, including exit visa requirements, on its population since 1991.

On December 5, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Albania is not in violation of paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 402(a) of the Trade Act of 1974, or paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subsection 409(a) of that act. That action allowed for the continuation of normal trade relations status for Albania and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver. This semiannual report is submitted as required by law pursuant to the determination of December 5, 1997.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 2, 1999.