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since before World War I; and if we do, interest rates will be lower, investment will be higher, there will be more businesses, more jobs and higher incomes. And we will be relatively less dependent on the vagaries of the world financial markets.

I believe that we have to do more to help people balance their work life and their family life. So when I talk about child care or family leave or the Patients' Bill of Rights, what I'm really saying is, most parents are working, and I think it's important for people to succeed at home and at work because the most important work in America is raising good children. And if it doesn't work out, as we often see, there is a grievous price to be paid.

I am concerned in the aftermath of what happened at Littleton, but I am also hopeful because we had all these school shootings last year and people wanted to do things, and a lot of things were done. But I think for the first time, the whole country now believes that what happened with those children could happen in any community. And I believe the whole country wants to do better and also recognizes that many of our children fall victim every year, not in stunning, tragic, big ways but in quiet alleys or in drive-by shootings or in other ways where they can almost die anonymously. And I want us to have a national campaign to make our children's lives less violent.

And I'd like to close with just a reflection on that and what we're doing in Kosovo and point out what I think is—in addition to economic opportunity for all and educational opportunity for all and the sense of general community—I think the most important thing about the Democratic Party on the eve of the 21st century is our vision of what community means at home, and our relationship to the rest of the world. And if you take these two difficult events and break them down, maybe I can make some sense of that.

What I honestly believe about the Littleton situation—and I've spent a lot of time thinking about it. I have been overwhelmingly impressed by almost all of the people I've seen from that community talking on television and going to the town hall meetings. Some of the brave parents, actually already—who lost their children—already able to try to make some contribution to a safer future for the rest of us. One father who lost his child was with Hillary last week, the day before Mother's Day, to be part of this whole antiviolence movement.

But what I think is that we now understand—I hope we do, as a people—that if we're going to make America a safer place for our children, we have to stop pointing the fingers at one another and start assuming responsibility. We have to—instead of saying, ''I wish someone else would do something,'' we have to say, ''Okay, I've shown up for duty. What am I supposed to do?''

Because this is an exceedingly complex thing—Willie and I could have an argument. I could take—you know, we have the—is it the entertainment culture or is it the gun culture? And he could take one side and I could take the other, and then 5 minutes later we could switch roles. We all know how to point fingers—we're good at that—and shift the blame.

Let's start with the facts of life today. For whatever reason, there are more children in the United States, of all races and in all socioeconomic groups, that are at risk of being victims of violence. You would all accept that, I presume; that is a fact, for whatever reason. And there are also children, therefore, at risk of being victims of violence from other young people. Therefore, there are a higher percentage of children in the United States than in most other advanced countries who are themselves vulnerable to violent conduct.

Now, if we start with that, and we say, ''Shouldn't we all be doing something,'' I think we can move to ''yes'' very quickly. One of the things that you see in all these tragic stories, it's heartbreaking, is how easy it is for children as they come of age and naturally seek their own independence to be strangers in their own homes and not to have people in their schools or their communities that are so connected to them that they can't drift off into the darkness.

So the fundamental thing is, we have to still do a better job trying to help parents understand what it means for children to move into adolescence and to drift away, and to be given both independence and still be held accountable and be involved with their parents and their lives. And we have to help

the schools do a better job of connecting and telling kids how they can find nonviolent ways to deal with their conflicts, and how they can count no matter what group they're in and how they can be treated with respect no matter what group they're in.

I don't see how anybody can dispute the fact that it's crazy to have a country where, you know, criminals can buy guns at gun shows they can't buy at gun stores. I mean, I think that's a pretty hard case to defend.

I think it's a hard case to defend to say we've abolished assault weapons—thanks in no small measure, by the way, to a citizen from San Francisco named Steve Sposato, who lost his wife in a shooting, a man who happened to be a Republican. I met him and his daughter. So we abolished assault weapons, but we let people keep bringing in these big ammunition clips and selling them legally as long as they were imported, as opposed to homegrown. How come these things are in the law? These things don't happen by accident, folks. I did the best I could back in 1994. I pushed that thing as hard as I could push. So now we have a sense all over the country we should close the loopholes.

Florida, not normally known as a raving liberal State, voted 72 percent in a public referendum to close the gun show loophole, and we're having trouble getting it done in Washington. That's not good. It's not going to kill the NRA to change its position. The gun manufacturers did, and I applaud them. They deserve a lot of credit. There have been—one of the most outstanding groups in this whole debate are the gun manufacturers, coming and saying, "Okay, let's clean up this business. Let's have responsible, commonsense controls. We want people to be able to hunt; we want to support the rights of sportsmen; but we don't need that. We need to deal with this."

So they have their responsibility. But so, too, does the entertainment industry. You can say if you start from their perspective, just like you can say if you start from the gun perspective, "Guns don't kill people, people do." Right? If you start from the entertainment perspective, you can say, "Well, we show these movies and we sell these video games in Europe and you don't have this level of violence." You can say that—in other words, from anybody else's perspective, you can always say this.

But here is the thing. Start with the kids. We have more kids getting hurt and more kids hurting other kids. Start with the facts. And we now have over 300 studies that show that the volume of sustained exposure to violence through the media—and now increasingly through interactive video games—is so great that it desensitizes children dramatically to the impact of violence and the real consequences of it, and therefore makes the most vulnerable children more likely to go over the edge.

Now, having said that, we have to find some commonsense things we can do. For example, you could change the whole advertising strategy of a lot of these games and other media outlets and not have a lot of the problems you have. But lots of other things can be done. I'm trying to make a larger point here. How we respond to this and whether we take on something really big and important like this and do what the Mothers and Students Against Drunk Driving did to drive down drunk driving; or do what the 10,000 business people did to hire 400,000 people off welfare so people wouldn't be just thrown in the streets—how we respond to this and whether we respond to this as one community coming together instead of pointing the finger at each other will define in large measure what kind of country we're going to be in the 21st century.

And the same is true of Kosovo. What in the world have these two things got in common? Well, in both cases, there at least is some evidence that part of the problem was one group of people looking down on another group of people and getting to where they hated them and then getting to where they thought it was legitimate to take them out. And if you look all over the world today, from the Middle East to the Balkans, to Rwanda and Africa, to the still unresolved conflict in Northern Ireland, what is at the root of most of the world's problems on the edge of the 21st century? Is it that the Kosovar Albanians don't have as good computers as the Serbs? Are we fighting over some software secret in central Africa? Not on your life. The economics are bringing people together. That's