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invest more in them. Our balanced budget calls for spending $200 million to help schools turn around if they're not performing well or shut them down and let parents choose other public schools if they don't turn around. But it is wrong to blame the kid, and it's wrong not to give the schools a chance. And we know these schools can be turned around if they have the resources and a good plan and they work the plan.

We've got to do better in Washington, and that's my job. But I was, 12 years, Governor of your neighboring State of Arkansas. And I know—I know—how important education is. You know, as President, the future of our children is the most important thing of all. But I have to pursue it in many ways. I have to preserve the national security. I have to work on making sure that we have Social Security and Medicare in a solid way, so that when the baby boomers retire, it doesn't bankrupt our kids and their ability to raise our grandkids. But if you're the Governor, the most important thing you ever have to do is see to the education of our children.

Now, here's why I know Bill Jefferson cares about that. He was too modest to say this, but he was born very poor in a small town, and his parents and his teachers and his school helped him work his way all the way to Harvard University. Then he married a wonderful woman who is even smarter than he is. [*Laughter*] And they have had five magnificent daughters who have all had brilliant academic careers, four of them already gone through Harvard. Why? Because they had a good plan. They believed in education. They had parents and teachers and schools and students, and they worked at it steadily.

So, no matter what I do as your President, you still need in Louisiana a Governor you know will fight for more teachers, for better teacher training, for better pay, for smaller classes, and for modern school buildings, for high standards and strong support.

I can tell you, he's fought with me every step of the way in Washington. When we had to vote in 1993 to bring down the deficit and increase spending in education, and I said we had to balance the budget, but we weren't going to cut education. We were going to do more, all the members of the other party were against me. The bill carried by one vote. To a major extent, the economic prosperity America enjoys today belongs to one vote, and it carried in one vote. If Bill Jefferson hadn't been in Congress and voted the right way, we might not be standing here today.

So let me say, I don't want him to leave, especially while I'm still in Washington. [*Laughter*] But he really can do even more good in Baton Rouge. And remember, twice he was voted the Outstanding State Legislator in the Louisiana Legislature. He's fought for you in Washington; he'll fight for you and our children's education in Baton Rouge. And I am honored to be here with him today at this wonderful school.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the courtyard. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans; Col. A.G. Davis, USMC, (Ret.), New Orleans superintendent of schools; Gail M. Glapion, president, and Scott P. Shea, vice president, New Orleans Parish School Board; Brenda Mitchell, president, United Teachers of New Orleans, and Representative Jefferson's daughters: Jamila, Jalila, Jelani, Nailah, and Akilah.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative William J. Jefferson in New Orleans

September 27, 1999

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I've had a wonderful day here. I don't think I've ever had a bad day in New Orleans. [*Laughter*] And I'm honored to be here with Bill and Andrea, with Vic and Fran Bussie. And Vic, you've done a lot of great things in your life, but you haven't given many better talks. That was very, very good.

I'm honored to be here with your bright young mayor, who has established such a fine record and has recently joined the ranks of the happily married. [*Laughter*] We're proud of him for that, too.

Let me say to all of you—I was just sitting here listening to what everybody else was saying, wondering if I could offer any unique perspective. I first came to New Orleans 50 years ago—I hate that. [*Laughter*] I was just a little boy. My mother was in nursing school here. And one of the most vivid memories

of my lifetime was seeing my mother kneel by the side of the railroad tracks and cry when I went home with my grandmother, because she had been widowed early, before my father—before I was born. My father died 3 months before I was born. And she came down here to get some education so she could support me.

I came back here when I was 15 and a budding musician. [*Laughter*] And they wouldn't let me in anyplace to hear anybody—[*laughter*]—because I was so young. And I saw—I never will forget this—I was walking away from my mother and I saw Al Hirt sitting there in some big English limousine, reading a newspaper, and he was going to go in and perform. I knocked on his window, told him who I was, and said I had come all the way down here from Hot Springs, Arkansas, and all I cared about was music. I didn't want to drink anything; I didn't want to gamble; I didn't want anything; I just wanted to go hear him play. He took me in and put me on the front table. It's funny what you remember, isn't it?

I've never forgotten that, and that sort of embodies the generosity that the people of this city and this State have exhibited to me throughout my life. And you did give Al Gore and me, Hillary and Tipper, and our administration the electoral votes of the people of Louisiana twice, and I'm profoundly grateful for that.

I want to say three or four things I think you ought to think about in this election. When I became President, I ran a long, hard campaign. I was written off for dead three or four times along the way—and three or four dozen times since. [*Laughter*] But Bill Jefferson was one of my first supporters. I remember the first time I came here, when the Jeffersons had me in their home. I met their beautiful, brilliant daughters, and their family members—many of whom are here today. The Congressman's father is here, mother-in-law is here, many others here.

And we went through that campaign, and I found that, to a remarkable degree, we shared the same philosophy. We were proud members of the Democratic Party, but we didn't like the fact that our party had been a part of the leadership of 12 years of Republican Presidents when we had the majority in the Congress, and together they quadrupled the debt of the country; and that we were in a terrible recession. Interest rates were high. Unemployment was high. Wages had been stagnant for more than a decade. We didn't like the fact that people thought because we believed in the United States Constitution and we were against racial discrimination, that somehow we were soft on crime or we thought able-bodied people shouldn't work instead of being on welfare.

We thought that the Democratic Party, and African-Americans in general, had been twisted and distorted and used as political whipping boys in campaigns. And we thought Washington was divided by gridlock, and we wanted a change.

So I said, give me a chance to change America, to change the direction of the country, change our party, to change our leadership in Washington. I have a simple philosophy: I want America in the 21st century to be a place where every person, without regard to race, creed, gender, or anything else, has a chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. I want America to be a place where we're all coming together, not being driven apart. And I want America to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and justice and prosperity.

And my strategy for getting there is to do everything I know how to do to give opportunity for all, demand responsibility from all Americans, and create a community of all Americans. That's what we said we'd do.

Now, in 1992, it was an argument. And the people decided to give me a chance, even though I was, in the rather disparaging characterization of the incumbent President, just a Governor from a small Southern State. [*Laughter*] The people decided to give me a chance. They bought our side of the argument.

By 1996, there was no argument anymore because the results were beginning to pour in. And now, in 1999, I can look back and say with gratitude and thanks and humility that it has worked out. The results speak for themselves. We have the longest peacetime expansion in history; 19.4 million jobs; the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years; the lowest welfare rate in 32 years; the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Today I announced

that this year's surplus will be $115 billion, the first time in 42 years we've had a surplus 2 years in a row.

And I say that to make this point—and along the way, by the way, with the HOPE scholarship and other financial incentives, we've opened the doors of college to virtually every American. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer; 90 percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time; 100,000 young Americans have served in AmeriCorps, in their communities all over this country, including this one, and earned some money for college. And we've been a force for peace and freedom throughout the world. And I'm proud of that.

What's that got to do with this? Well, I'll just give you a few examples. And what's that got to do with the Governor's race, even if it has something to do with our record? And I'll give you a few examples of that.

Number one, all this started with one vote in August of 1993. The economy started getting better after the election, as soon as I announced my economic plan. But it did not get voted on in Congress until August, because it was fairly controversial. I had cut hundreds of programs but dramatically increased education. And I asked the wealthiest Americans to pay more taxes, and cut taxes on 15 million Americans who were working for modest wages, lower wages, with children in their home.

And there was a lot of controversy, and the Republican Party in Congress decided that they would vote against this to the person, that they would not give me one vote, and that they would tell everybody it was a just a tax increase, even though they knew only a tiny fraction of Americans were going to have one.

Now, that bill passed by one vote in the United States Senate—Al Gore's vote. And it passed by one vote in the United States House of Representatives. If Bill Jefferson hadn't voted for that, it wouldn't have happened, the recovery probably wouldn't have occurred, and none of us would probably be standing here today doing this. So I am grateful to Bill Jefferson.

I'm grateful to him for supporting our agenda to reach out to other countries—to Latin America, to Africa—to expand trade of American products, to build up the Port of New Orleans, to bring us closer to other people in other countries. I'm grateful to Bill Jefferson for supporting the anticrime agenda that Mayor Morial talks about all the time: get guns out of the wrong hands; put more community police on the street; give our kids something good to do.

And I'm grateful to Bill Jefferson for supporting my education agenda every step of the way, including our plan to hire 100,000 more teachers to get class size down in the early grades—something he's running on; our plan to build or modernize 6,000 schools, which would include his commitment to air-condition the schools that don't have it. Our plan to triple the number of our young people who are eligible for after-school programs; set high standards for failing schools, and if they don't turn around, let the parents go to another public school with their kid, but help the schools turn around.

We can do that. I've seen that all over America. I'm telling you, I've been in the schools in the worst neighborhoods you can imagine in terms of adversity, and I've seen children learning at a high level because of what was done in the school.

So, yes, I'm grateful to Bill Jefferson. And a lot of what we enjoy today came as a direct result of policies he supported that he played a critical role in bringing to bear.

The second point I'd like to make to you is that I believe I'm the only person in this room who has actually been a Governor. I know something about this. [*Laughter*] And I did it quite a long time. I served 12 years. I served for 12 years and would have served for 14 if the people hadn't elected me President. [*Laughter*] And I'm telling you, I loved every day of it. It is a wonderful job—if you love people and if you care about good schools, good jobs, and creating strong, healthy, vibrant communities.

We have done more in the education area probably than any administration, certainly since the Johnson administration. But most of the money for schools and most of the direction for schools, by State constitutional law, comes from the State—in every State in America. So it is very important.

You know, education is very important to me, personally, and to Hillary and to all of our administration. But the President has to protect the American people in many ways—the national security has to come first, and then you have to deal with a whole range of other issues. But a Governor has no more important job, none, than education.

And a Governor also has to be able to get people together to really get things done. What you want in a Governor is somebody who is smart, committed, with a good heart, who is passionate about what he or she believes but is not particularly partisan. And I can tell you, Bill and I—we all came out of State Government; he and I both did. We're both, frankly, mortified by how partisan that crowd is in Washington. [*Laughter*] I mean, I always tell him there's plenty of things for us to argue about in the next election, but the people give us a paycheck every 2 weeks to show up for work in the meanwhile. And we're not supposed to fight about everything; we're supposed to work out things and get things done. That's the sort of person he is.

And he has a lot of friends in the Congress who are Republicans because they know that he has not responded in kind to the harsh partisanship of their leaders and that he is still willing to work with people of good will to get things done. You cannot be a good Governor unless you are both open to people in both parties but absolutely aggressive in what you believe and what you want to achieve. You need both an agenda and an ability to bring people together. He can do that. And I did this for 12 years; I'm telling you, this is important, and he can do it superbly well.

The other thing that has not been mentioned—Vic talked about his service in the legislature—he was twice voted, twice, the best member of the Louisiana Legislature. So he knows about this job.

The last thing I'll say is this, and I think it's important. I want to thank Anne and Stan and Chris Rice for having us in this magnificent facility. But this facility used to be an orphanage, and I got to thinking—Hillary and I had a very moving event at the White House this week to celebrate our attempts to move people—kids—from foster care into adoption, and all the work we've done over the last 7 years—one thing we have done, by the way, on a bipartisan basis—to speed up adoptions. And I got down here today, and when I was over at the school, a woman stopped me and said, ''Mr. President, thank you for helping to fix the adoption laws. I just adopted two children.'' So we've worked on this.

Now, I want to say that I want you to think about this as a place where children once lived who had no family. This man knows what it's like to have a difficult time. He knows what it's like to have the support of a good family. He knows what it's like to build a good family, and he and his wife have five magnificent daughters who have done superbly well because they have good parents and a good home.

In the end, having now served 12 years as a Governor and 7 years as President, I can tell you, a lot of times you have to make decisions that nobody is smart enough to make. A lot of times decisions come to me that, no matter how smart I think I am, I cannot think my way through. And all you can do is pray to God to give you the wisdom to do it, and listen to your heart, not your head.

So the last thing I'll say is, remember everything—the man has proven he's had the courage to take a tough decision. He cast a decisive vote on the most important bill that brought us the prosperity we enjoy today. He has wide experience in State Government. He has the capacity to get people together. He clearly has the right agenda. There is no more important agenda for Louisiana's future than getting the education up to world-class levels.

But when it's all said and done, what really counts is, do you have a good heart. Keep in mind, 50 years later I still remember my mother loved me enough to kneel down on those railroad tracks and cry when I had to go away. When it's all said and done, you don't remember first and foremost in the last moments of your life the honors you had, the riches you had; you remember who you liked and who you loved, how it felt when the seasons changed, and what it felt like to be really, really important, to matter in the

lives of other people. The people of Louisiana will matter to Bill Jefferson if he is the Governor.

I agree with what has been said. You should only vote for him if you think he'd be the best Governor. But if you think he'd be the best Governor and you let him be defeated, it would be a terrible thing, because the children here, the children of this State deserve the very best person they can get in experience, in mind, and in heart.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Green Velvet Ballroom at St. Elizabeth's Orphanage. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Anne and Stan Rice and their son, Christopher; Representative Jefferson's father, Mose, mother-in-law, Bernice Green, wife, Andrea, and their daughters Jamila, Jalili, Jelani, Nailah, and Akilah; Victor Bussie, president emeritus, Louisiana AFL–CIO, and his wife, Fran; and Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans.

Statement on Action Against Global Climate Change

September 27, 1999

I commend the hundreds of mayors and other local officials across the country who today are committing themselves to the fight against global climate change. The communities they represent understand that the threat of global warming is real. They also understand that we can begin to address this threat through actions that both help our environment and save money for taxpayers, consumers, and businesses. Today's pledge will help encourage other communities across American to do their part to meet this global challenge.

Regrettably, even as ordinary citizens, local leaders, and a growing number of leading corporations are taking action, many in Congress are ignoring the mounting evidence of global warming and thwarting commonsense efforts to address it. I urge Congress to fully fund my proposed package of investments to accelerate the deployment of clean energy technologies for the 21st century—including the proposed Clean Air Partnership Fund, which will provide grants to State and local governments for projects that reduce both greenhouse gases and pollutants like soot, smog, and air toxics. Finally, I call on Congress to withdraw all appropriations "riders" aimed at strangling programs that save energy, save consumers and businesses money, and reduce global warming pollution.

I look forward to working with local leaders to meet this pressing environmental challenge, and I applaud their leadership and dedication.

Statement on the Death of Oseola McCarty

September 27, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Oseola McCarty of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Ms. McCarty is a true American hero. In 1995 she donated $150,000 to the University of Southern Mississippi for scholarships for needy students. The extraordinary thing about this gift was that Ms. McCarty accumulated the money from working 75 years washing and ironing people's clothes.

I had the pleasure of awarding this extraordinary woman the Presidential Citizens' Medal for her extraordinary act of generosity. While we mourn her passing, Oseola McCarty's commitment to the dignity of work, her belief in the power of education, and her extraordinary generosity ensure that her memory will live on for generations to come. Our country needs more people like her, who don't just talk about responsibility and community but who live those values everyday.

Statement on Measures Regarding Certain Liberians in the United States

September 27, 1999

Today I directed the Attorney General and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to defer for one year from September 29 the deportation of certain Liberians who are present in the United States on that date. This action is aimed at promoting stability in Liberia and west Africa. In particular, I am concerned that a decision by our Government to deport Liberians who have enjoyed the protection of our country for many years