



Dear Leader,

Thank you for all your hard work and friendship over the years. It has been with your support that Vice President Gore and I have been able to continue fighting for our families, our values, and our future as a nation.

Now I am asking you to help me bring my message to all Americans through our Speakers Program. This message, which will have the most impact in our neighborhoods, in our communities, and in our cities and towns, is that we must work together to meet our nation's present and future challenges. Americans have always sought and always risen to solve our challenges. When we work together, we never fail.

As you know, this election is about whether our government will continue its commitment to provide a quality education, a secure retirement, a healthy environment, and a fair opportunity for every American. In the past three years, our Administration has cut the deficit nearly in half, and the economy has responded by creating 8.5 million new jobs. The combined rate of unemployment, inflation, and mortgage rates is the lowest it has been in 27 years. The crime rate is down, making our streets safer for our children. Our leadership in the world is strong, bringing new hope for peace.

Your participation in this Speakers Program will be vital in bringing this vision of greater opportunity and a brighter future to all Americans. Please use this information for speaking engagements, public appearances, group gatherings, talk radio, or wherever else you see the need.

The campaign will be sending you regular updates to help you bring our message to the American people. Please feel free to contact the campaign if you need additional help in our common efforts.

Thank you for your commitment to guarantee America's leadership into the 21st century.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Clinton

Designing Your Message

Helpful Guidelines for Clinton/Gore '96 Leaders

Tell Your Story

The most effective way to reach your audience is to talk about your own personal experience. Let people know why you believe so strongly in this President, based on your own beliefs and values.

Raise the Stakes of this Election

This election may be the most important of our lifetime — a choice not just between candidates, but between very different visions of our country's future. The outcome of this election will determine what kind of country we live in, what we value and respect, and what our children's future will be.

The Best Politics are the Least Political

The public is tired of hearing about political strategies and spin doctors. People don't want to be manipulated or "spun"; they take the election of their President seriously, and they want us to take it seriously, too. Resist the temptation to talk about strategy or poll data. Talk about governing, not campaigning.

The Best Message Builds on the Strongest Presidential Statement — Exemplified in the President's State of the Union Address

Like the President's State of the Union Address, our message should be:

- ☆ Based on Values;
- ☆ Oriented Toward the Future;
- ☆ Framed as Challenges — Challenges We Can Meet Together.

Use Values-Based Language

The vote for President is a vote for leadership — and leaders are chosen on the basis of values, not programs or legislation. This is an especially important point for Democrats, because too often in the past we talked more about the programs and policies we cared about, instead of the values that these policies represented. That enabled our opponents to portray us as not having any values.

This time we want to make our values explicit, by talking about leadership, family, opportunity, responsibility, and common ground.

Leadership:

President Clinton is a leader who does what's right — not because it is easy, but because it is the right thing to do.

The President took on the National Rifle Association to win passage of the Brady Bill so that more than 60,000 people with criminal records could not get handguns last year. He put a ban on assault weapons, to make the streets safer for our children. That wasn't easy — but it was the right thing to do.

The President made the decision to protect democracy and human rights in Haiti, and now to help keep the peace in Bosnia — not because the polls showed it was easy, but because it was the right thing to do.

Family:

The most common identification: we all think of ourselves as part of a family, and caring about our families is one of the values we have in common. We want to talk about making a difference for families, and about the value of policies that strengthen and protect families. We strengthen families by giving parents the tools they need: family and medical leave, health care for our parents, education for our children, clean water and safe communities.

Opportunity and Responsibility:

President Clinton believes in opportunity for every American, for every child, for every family.

But opportunity must be accompanied by responsibility; we should meet our responsibilities to one another, to our families, to our communities, and to our country. Public policy should help people who act responsibly. That's why President Clinton believes we should raise the minimum wage.

Common Ground:

Perhaps the single most important question that will be decided by this election: are we one country, committed to working together to meet the challenges before us?

President Clinton urges us to overcome the voices of division and the politics of division.

The President talks about our country being founded on challenges, not promises. But he adds that when we work together to meet those challenges, we never fail. President Clinton said, "That is the key to a more perfect union: our individual dreams must be realized by our common efforts."

Oriented to the Future

The Clinton/Gore Administration has a great record of achievements — but we must also look ahead. We know there is more to do. Our message should focus on the future, referring to accomplishments as examples of what the President is doing to lead our country in the right direction.

And remember: Our message, like our direction, is positive. Leaders bring hope.

Frame Our Goals as Challenges

Speaking in terms of the challenges before us enables us to combine two important American traits: optimism and realism. We are optimistic because we believe the future should be better. We are realistic enough to know that we aren't there yet. Frame the issues of this campaign in these terms. For example: How do we meet the challenge of good economic policy? By moving forward, continuing to expand the economy, and making sure the good economic news means good news for family budgets.

Contrast and Compare

So far, we have talked about presenting President Clinton's positive message. As we get closer to Election Day, it will become increasingly clear that this election is a choice between two very different candidates, with different values and records of achievement. We welcome the chance to make the comparison. Remind people that this election is a choice between:

- ☆ The Future — or the Past
- ☆ Change — or the Status Quo
- ☆ Values — or Insiders
- ☆ Economic Growth — or a Return to the Failed Economy of 1991

We hope these guidelines are helpful. If you have any suggestions or questions regarding the Speakers Program, please call Gloria Johnson at 202-331-1996.

Ann F. Lewis
Deputy Campaign Manager
Clinton/Gore '96
April 20, 1996

Environmental Protections

Environmental Progress

“Our challenge is to leave our environment safe and clean for the next generation.”

President Clinton

President Clinton and Vice President Gore continue to lead the fight for the health and future of American families by protecting our environment.

- ☆ President Clinton is keeping our water clean by introducing Safe Drinking Water reforms that require testing for and eliminating dangerous contaminants.
- ☆ He is keeping our air clean and our children healthy by not allowing lobbyists to write their own loopholes that would weaken environmental laws.
- ☆ Through Vice President Gore’s efforts, we are “reinventing” environmental regulations, cutting red tape, and making programs work better and cost less.
- ☆ The President signed executive orders to increase recycling and cut waste in federal buildings.
- ☆ He signed the California Desert Protection Act, adding 3 million acres to the National Park system.

Environmental Protection

- ☆ The President is standing firm in balancing the budget without compromising environmental protections and the health of our children.
- ☆ Protecting the environment will help expand the economy and create more jobs.
- ☆ President Clinton will continue to strengthen community right-to-know laws that require polluters to disclose their emissions — people have a right to know that their air and water are safe.
- ☆ The Administration is challenging businesses and communities to take more initiative in protecting the environment, and making it easier for them to do so.



—

Reducing Crime and Drugs

Progress Against Crime

*“Our challenge is to take back our streets
from crime, gangs, and drugs.”*

President Clinton

Children are beginning to feel safer from gangs, drugs, and crime. Under the leadership of President Clinton, working with police and communities throughout our country, Americans are taking their streets back.

The President:

- ☆ Is adding 100,000 new police to our streets through the Crime Bill. The crime rate is down — more than 33,000 officers have already been funded.
- ☆ Signed the Brady Bill, which has prevented over 60,000 people with criminal records from buying guns.
- ☆ Signed the Assault Weapons Ban to keep these violent weapons out of our neighborhoods.
- ☆ Wants “three strikes and you’re out” to remain the law for violent offenders.
- ☆ Dismantled Columbia’s Cali Cartel, the primary source of cocaine, and added drug patrols on our borders.
- ☆ Enacted the Safe and Drug-Free School Act to protect schools from crime and drugs.

Protection Against Crime

- ☆ Community policing is working: local communities across the country are forming partnerships with their local police to prevent crime.
- ☆ Urging the Republican Congress to pass legislation that gives tougher jail sentences to drug dealers and gang members who carry guns.
- ☆ Persian Gulf War hero General Barry McCaffrey will protect our children as America’s new drug czar.
- ☆ The rule for residents of local housing authorities and tenant associations who commit crimes and peddle drugs should be: one strike and you’re out.



Educational Opportunity

Educational Progress

“Our challenge is to provide Americans with the educational opportunities we need for a new century.”

President Clinton

Education is the foundation of our country — the basis of our shared ideals as citizens and the path to high-wage jobs. That is why President Clinton has made education a top national priority. He has:

- ☆ Increased Head Start funding by almost \$760 million, to provide early education to an additional 50,000 disadvantaged children.
- ☆ Expanded college aid and reformed student loan programs to reduce costs to students and save billions for taxpayers.
- ☆ Created AmeriCorps, which is allowing 45,000 young people to earn money for college by serving their communities.
- ☆ Implemented Goals 2000 to increase performance and abilities through national standards.

Educational Opportunity

- ☆ Americans can compete and prosper only through lifetime education and training.
- ☆ The President has launched an initiative to link every classroom and library to the Information Superhighway by the year 2000.
- ☆ Greater involvement by parents in their children’s education will strengthen our schools and families.
- ☆ The GI Bill for American workers will consolidate job training programs into one voucher for community college and vocational training.
- ☆ We can create more access to college by making \$10,000 a year in college tuition tax deductible.

Economic Security

Economic Security

“Our challenge is to ensure that every American has the opportunity to achieve economic security.”

President Clinton

Our National Economic News is good:

- ☆ President Clinton cut the federal deficit almost in half during his first three years in office.
- ☆ Lower deficits and lower interest rates have helped economic expansion, and the economy created more than 8.5 million new jobs — 1 million of these jobs in the automotive, manufacturing, and construction industries.
- ☆ The lowest combined rate of unemployment, inflation, and mortgage rates in over 27 years.

“Our challenge is to ensure that positive national economic news means economic security for working families.”

President Clinton's economic policy:

- ☆ Continues to expand high wage jobs.
- ☆ Increases family incomes through tax relief for working families and a raise in the minimum wage.
- ☆ Increases access to health care insurance, even after changing jobs or family illness.
- ☆ Secures pension benefits; protects pension benefits from corporate raid.
- ☆ Creates opportunities for education and training for a lifetime.
- ☆ Makes college tuition costs tax deductible up to \$10,000 for each family.

Meeting America's Challenges

Meeting Our Challenges Together

“There have always been things we could do together – dreams we could make real – which we could never have done before on our own. We Americans have forged our identity, our very union, from every point of view on the planet. . . But we are bound by a faith more powerful than any doctrine that divides us – by our belief in progress, our love of liberty, and our relentless search for common ground. America has always sought and always risen to the challenge.”

President Clinton

In President Clinton's January 23, 1996, State of the Union address, he spoke about the challenges we face together as Americans. President Clinton is focusing on finding solutions, and his policies and legislative agenda will strengthen America's families. The President has set out 7 challenges:

- ☆ Cherish our children and strengthen our families.
- ☆ Provide Americans with the educational opportunities we need for a new century.
- ☆ Help every American achieve economic security.
- ☆ Take back our streets from crime, gangs, and drugs.
- ☆ Leave our environment safe and clean for the next generation.
- ☆ Maintain America's leadership for freedom and peace.
- ☆ Reinvent our government and make our democracy work for all Americans.

A Budget with Values



“We must balance the budget without abandoning our fundamental obligations to our parents, our children, and our future.”

President Clinton

President Clinton believes we must balance the budget while remaining true to our fundamental values. To keep our economy growing and to protect our families, President Clinton:

- ☆ Submitted a balanced budget that protects Medicare, Medicaid, education, the environment, and provides tax relief for working families, while balancing the budget within 7 years.
- ☆ Proposed a responsible balanced budget that reforms Medicaid, Medicare, and welfare, while cutting nearly \$300 billion in discretionary spending.
- ☆ Lowered the deficit by half in his first 3 years in office; we now have the lowest combined rate of unemployment, inflation, and mortgage rates in 27 years.

Expanding Opportunity and Rewarding Responsibility

- ☆ President Clinton expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to provide tax relief for 40 million Americans and vetoed efforts to raise taxes on working families.
- ☆ The President is fighting to increase the minimum wage; he has increased child support enforcement to record levels.
- ☆ He is working to change welfare in order to reinforce the basic values of work, responsibility, and family.

Putting Families First



Putting Families First

*“Our challenge is to cherish our children
and strengthen American families.”*

President Clinton

President Clinton is putting government on the side of working families. He is giving parents the tools they need to protect their children:

- ☆ He signed the Family and Medical Leave Act — allowing families to care for their loved ones without fear of losing their jobs.
- ☆ President Clinton expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit to provide tax relief for working families.
- ☆ He has expanded Head Start, increased access to child immunization, and strengthened child support collection.
- ☆ The President is preserving environmental protections, ensuring clean water and air.
- ☆ President Clinton and Vice President Gore successfully fought for the V-chip in television sets to help parents better monitor what their children watch.
- ☆ He is standing up to the tobacco and gun lobbies to protect our children's safety.
- ☆ The President is promoting safe schools by encouraging School Uniform Policies to foster unity, discipline, and respect. The Administration has developed a manual to assist schools in establishing these policies.

Creating Stronger Families

- ☆ We must do right by our children by reforming our welfare system and moving people from welfare to work.
- ☆ We must do everything we can to continue to reduce the teen pregnancy rate.
- ☆ We must meet our responsibilities across generations by ensuring health care for our parents and access to higher education for all children.

Leadership that Makes a Difference

President Clinton: Leadership

“The role of the Presidency is about leadership. I will continue to make the tough decisions that strengthen our families and our nation, based on America’s fundamental values and what is right.”

President Clinton

Leadership that makes a difference:

- ☆ President Clinton does what is right, not because it is easy, but because it should be done.
- ☆ The President stood up to the National Rifle Association to enact the waiting period on handgun purchases and a ban on assault weapons. Now, he is standing up to tobacco companies that market cigarettes to our children.
- ☆ President Clinton has taken the lead in working for peace in Haiti and in Bosnia, making the tough political decisions on behalf of a more peaceful and secure world.

Leadership: Building opportunity for all Americans:

- ☆ President Clinton believes the American dream is for every family.
- ☆ He made the tough economic decisions that cut the deficit nearly in half, while continuing to invest in education and tax relief for working families.
- ☆ His economic policies emphasize creating high-wage and private-sector jobs. Because education is so crucial, he is striving to make every student computer literate and college more affordable.

Leadership that seeks common ground:

- ☆ President Clinton believes we must seek common ground because together, as Americans, we can meet any challenge.
- ☆ Common ground enables us to move beyond divisive rhetoric and take real action at a time when many politicians are trying to divide us.
- ☆ President Clinton reminds us that we are all in this together — and together we have the strength and wisdom to do what is right.

President Clinton

Fighting for Quality Health Care

“For working families to succeed in the new economy, they must be able to buy health insurance that they do not lose when they change jobs or when someone in their family gets sick. We must do more to make quality health care available to every American. Congress should start by passing the bipartisan Kassebaum-Kennedy health care bill that would require insurance companies to stop dropping people when they switch jobs and stop denying coverage for preexisting conditions.”

President Bill Clinton

President Clinton is fighting hard for health care reform. He is dedicated to guaranteeing health security to all Americans and to containing health care costs for families and businesses. Over 40 million Americans have no health insurance, and millions more are just one illness away from losing it. America's families deserve better. President Clinton will continue to work toward making health care available to all Americans, improving the quality of health care, strengthening Medicare, and expanding coverage. The President is working for healthy families and children by:

- ☆ Enacting the Family and Medical Leave Act, which enables workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a family member without fear of losing their jobs;
- ☆ Establishing a Comprehensive Childhood Immunization Plan to ensure vaccinations and healthy futures for all children. The President's historic plan helped 75% of two-year-old children to become fully immunized in 1995;
- ☆ Making investment in AIDS programs a top priority. In his first four budgets to Congress, the President increased funding for AIDS research, prevention, and treatment by over 40%, including increasing funding for the Ryan White CARE Act by almost 130%;
- ☆ Fighting to give all Americans quality health care and focusing on rising health care costs — last year, health care costs had their smallest increase in nearly two decades;
- ☆ Increasing funding for breast cancer research by 65%;
- ☆ Proposing targeted measures to stop children's access to tobacco products and to ban cigarette advertising directed at children;
- ☆ Putting the Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC) on a full funding path;

- ☆ Revoking the Reagan/Bush restriction on abortion counseling (the “gag rule”), abortions in military hospitals, and the “Mexico City” policy;
- ☆ Introducing, as part of his balanced budget plan, a health care reform initiative that strengthens Medicare and expands preventive benefits;
- ☆ Launching “Operation Restore Trust” to combat Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse. This initiative is already paying dividends, and it is expected that the investment will yield a return through recoveries, fines, penalties, and savings to the Medicare Trust Fund;
- ☆ Collaborating with the managed care industry and providing objective information to beneficiaries about plan choices under Medicare, leading to a growth in voluntary enrollment in Medicare managed care plans;
- ☆ Working with states to test innovative approaches to Medicaid benefits and services, while preserving coverage and guarantees;
- ☆ Proposing a \$13 billion increase in veterans’ benefits — of which \$1 billion will be directed to the VA health system to provide treatment for 43,000 additional veterans.

Building on Our Progress

President Clinton remains firmly committed to guaranteeing health security to all Americans. That is why he included reforms in his balanced budget proposal that would:

- ☆ Reform the insurance market — so that people do not lose health insurance when they lose or change their jobs or when a family member falls ill, and so that small businesses can afford to buy health insurance for their workers;
- ☆ Help workers who lose their jobs keep their health insurance by making them eligible for premium subsidies to pay for private insurance coverage for up to six months. This proposal would provide coverage for 3.8 million additional Americans each year;
- ☆ Level the playing field for the self-employed by gradually increasing the self-employed tax deduction to 50%;
- ☆ Crack down on fraud and abuse by strengthening laws so that we can better prosecute health care fraud in all government programs and private plans, guaranteeing funding to investigate and prosecute fraud in Medicare and Medicaid, increasing penalties so that wrongdoers are punished severely, and better coordinating state and federal anti-fraud activities.

Meeting America’s Challenges

Today’s generation is our nation’s future. Only when our children are provided with the best opportunities this country has to offer, can we truly say that we are prepared for the challenges of the future.

President Clinton

Fighting for Quality Health Care

“For working families to succeed in the new economy, they must be able to buy health insurance that they do not lose when they change jobs or when someone in their family gets sick. We must do more to make quality health care available to every American. Congress should start by passing the bipartisan Kassebaum-Kennedy health care bill that would require insurance companies to stop dropping people when they switch jobs and stop denying coverage for preexisting conditions.”

President Bill Clinton

President Clinton is fighting hard for health care reform. He is dedicated to guaranteeing health security to all Americans and to containing health care costs for families and businesses. Over 40 million Americans have no health insurance, and millions more are just one illness away from losing it. America's families deserve better. President Clinton will continue to work toward making health care available to all Americans, improving the quality of health care, strengthening Medicare, and expanding coverage. The President is working for healthy families and children by:

- ☆ Enacting the Family and Medical Leave Act, which enables workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a family member without fear of losing their jobs;
- ☆ Establishing a Comprehensive Childhood Immunization Plan to ensure vaccinations and healthy futures for all children. The President's historic plan helped 75% of two-year-old children to become fully immunized in 1995;
- ☆ Making investment in AIDS programs a top priority. In his first four budgets to Congress, the President increased funding for AIDS research, prevention, and treatment by over 40%, including increasing funding for the Ryan White CARE Act by almost 130%;
- ☆ Fighting to give all Americans quality health care and focusing on rising health care costs — last year, health care costs had their smallest increase in nearly two decades;
- ☆ Increasing funding for breast cancer research by 65%;
- ☆ Proposing targeted measures to stop children's access to tobacco products and to ban cigarette advertising directed at children;
- ☆ Putting the Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC) on a full funding path;

- ☆ Revoking the Reagan/Bush restriction on abortion counseling (the “gag rule”), abortions in military hospitals, and the “Mexico City” policy;
- ☆ Introducing, as part of his balanced budget plan, a health care reform initiative that strengthens Medicare and expands preventive benefits;
- ☆ Launching “Operation Restore Trust” to combat Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse. This initiative is already paying dividends, and it is expected that the investment will yield a return through recoveries, fines, penalties, and savings to the Medicare Trust Fund;
- ☆ Collaborating with the managed care industry and providing objective information to beneficiaries about plan choices under Medicare, leading to a growth in voluntary enrollment in Medicare managed care plans;
- ☆ Working with states to test innovative approaches to Medicaid benefits and services, while preserving coverage and guarantees;
- ☆ Proposing a \$13 billion increase in veterans’ benefits — of which \$1 billion will be directed to the VA health system to provide treatment for 43,000 additional veterans.

Building on Our Progress

President Clinton remains firmly committed to guaranteeing health security to all Americans. That is why he included reforms in his balanced budget proposal that would:

- ☆ Reform the insurance market — so that people do not lose health insurance when they lose or change their jobs or when a family member falls ill, and so that small businesses can afford to buy health insurance for their workers;
- ☆ Help workers who lose their jobs keep their health insurance by making them eligible for premium subsidies to pay for private insurance coverage for up to six months. This proposal would provide coverage for 3.8 million additional Americans each year;
- ☆ Level the playing field for the self-employed by gradually increasing the self-employed tax deduction to 50%;
- ☆ Crack down on fraud and abuse by strengthening laws so that we can better prosecute health care fraud in all government programs and private plans, guaranteeing funding to investigate and prosecute fraud in Medicare and Medicaid, increasing penalties so that wrongdoers are punished severely, and better coordinating state and federal anti-fraud activities.

Meeting America’s Challenges

Today’s generation is our nation’s future. Only when our children are provided with the best opportunities this country has to offer, can we truly say that we are prepared for the challenges of the future.

President Clinton

Strengthening the Values of Family and Work

“For too long our welfare system has undermined the values of family and work, instead of supporting them...I challenge this Congress to send me a bipartisan welfare reform bill that will really move people from welfare to work and do the right thing by our children. I will sign it immediately.”

President Bill Clinton

President Clinton is committed to welfare reform that reinforces the basic American values of work, responsibility, and family. We must reward work over welfare, require people to take responsibility for supporting themselves and their families, and ensure that children are protected.

We have bipartisan consensus throughout our country on the fundamental elements of real welfare reform. Congress should not waste this opportunity, It should enact national legislation. While waiting for Congress to act, the Clinton Administration is changing the welfare system profoundly by:

- ☆ Granting waivers to 37 states to give them flexibility to fix the welfare system at the local level. These waivers are making work and responsibility a way of life for more than 10 million people — about 75 percent of all welfare recipients. Welfare caseloads have declined by 1.4 million since March 1994 — a decrease of 10 percent;
- ☆ Collecting a record level of child support (\$11 billion, a nearly 40 percent increase) because parents must meet their responsibilities to their children. We have proposed the toughest child support enforcement measures ever, including suspending drivers' licenses and tracking delinquent parents across state lines;
- ☆ Allowing states to impose tougher sanctions on welfare recipients who refuse to work;
- ☆ Providing tax relief for 40 million working Americans by increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to reward work;
- ☆ Working with community, business, and religious leaders to form the National Campaign to Reduce Teen Pregnancy, which will marshal private resources to reduce teen pregnancy; and
- ☆ Vetoing Congressional legislation that did very little to encourage work and too much that could harm children.

President Clinton will continue to work with Congress and the nation's Governors to pass welfare reform that is tough on work and fair to children. Until then, the Administration is continuing to fight for welfare reform by proposing a sweeping plan that would:

- ☆ Impose time limits and require work;
- ☆ Provide adequate funding for child care, helping people to move from welfare to work;
- ☆ Strengthen child support enforcement;
- ☆ Protect children; and
- ☆ Save taxpayers \$40 billion.

Meeting America's Challenges

It is time to have welfare be a second chance and responsibility be a way of life. The dignity of work, the bond of family, and the virtue of responsibility are American values that no child in America should ever have to grow up without.



President Clinton

Creating Greater Opportunity for Women

Never before have American women had so many options, or such difficult challenges. It is time not only to make women full partners in government, but to make government work for women and their families.

President Bill Clinton

President Clinton has an unprecedented record of supporting women and their families. By improving the lives of American women, we make a vital investment in America's future. The Clinton Administration is committed to providing more economic, professional, and educational opportunities for women. President Clinton has:

- ☆ Increased small business loans to women-owned businesses by 86% and expanded the public-private Small Business Administration's Women Demonstration Program—providing business skills and training for women;
- ☆ Hired more women to top government positions than any previous Administration: 42% of the President's appointees are women, six women hold Cabinet-level positions, and 59% of Clinton Administration judicial nominees are women;
- ☆ Opened 260,000 new jobs for women in the military by removing barriers to certain job classifications;
- ☆ Signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, allowing families to care for their loved ones without fear of losing their job;
- ☆ Established a Childhood Immunization Plan to ensure vaccinations and healthy futures for all children;
- ☆ Increased funding for breast cancer research by 65%;
- ☆ Supported increased safety, effectiveness, and availability of mammography;
- ☆ Signed legislation requiring that women be included in National Institute of Health-sponsored research;
- ☆ Fought to protect family planning and clinic safety;
- ☆ Created a national, toll-free hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) to help communities fight domestic violence;

- ☆ Collected a record level of child support (\$11 billion, a nearly 40% increase) because parents must meet their responsibilities to their children;
- ☆ Signed the Violence Against Women Act, the first comprehensive federal effort to fight violence against women and protect victims' rights. We have tripled funding for battered women's shelters, and bolstered law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services;
- ☆ Established the White House Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach to ensure that the concerns of women in America are addressed at all levels of decision making;
- ☆ Established the first Deputy Assistant Secretary for Women's Health; and
- ☆ Created the "Working Women Count Honor Role" — highlighting employers with creative solutions to unique problems faced by working women, such as emergency care.

Buil ding on Our Progress

President Clinton will continue to support policies that include women, treat all people with respect, and provide opportunities in the workplace and education by:

- ☆ Creating more ways to expand economic opportunities for women;
- ☆ Supporting an increase in the minimum wage - 3/5 of minimum wage workers are women;
- ☆ Making child care more affordable and accessible, and continuing to strengthen enforcement of child support;
- ☆ Protecting funding for programs that benefit women and families; and
- ☆ Ensuring that women's health issues continue to be effectively addressed.

Meeting America's Chal l enges

By investing in women, we help all people to reach their fullest potential as individuals and as members of our society. When women thrive, their families thrive. When families thrive, communities flourish, and our nation reaps the benefits.

President William Jefferson Clinton

State of the Union Address

JANUARY 23, 1996

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, members of the 104th Congress, distinguished guests, my fellow Americans all across our land:

Let me begin tonight by saying to our men and women in uniform around the world, and especially those helping peace take root in Bosnia and to their families, I thank you. America is very, very proud of you.

My duty tonight is to report on the state of the Union — not the state of our government, but of our American community; and to set forth our responsibilities, in the words of our Founders, to form a more perfect union.

The state of the Union is strong. Our economy is the healthiest it has been in three decades. We have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years. We have created nearly 8 million new jobs, over a million of them in basic industries, like construction and automobiles. America is selling more cars than Japan for the first time since the 1970s. And for three years in a row, we have had a record number of new businesses started in our country.

Our leadership in the world is also strong, bringing hope for new peace. And perhaps most important, we are gaining ground in restoring our fundamental values. The crime rate, the welfare and food stamp rolls, the poverty rate and the teen pregnancy rate are all down. And as they go down, prospects for America's future go up.

We live in an age of possibility. A hundred years ago we moved from farm to factory. Now we move to an age of technology, information, and global competition. These changes have opened vast new opportunities for our people, but they have also presented them with stiff challenges. While more Americans are living better, too many of our fellow citizens are working harder just to keep up, and they are rightly concerned about the security of their families.

We must answer here three fundamental questions: First, how do we make the American Dream of opportunity for all a reality for all Americans who are willing to work for it? Second, how do we preserve our old and enduring values as we move into the future? And, third, how do we meet these challenges together, as one America?

We know big government does not have all the answers. We know there's not a program for every problem. We have worked to give the American people a smaller, less bureaucratic government in Washington. And we have to give the American people one that lives within its means.

The era of big government is over. But we cannot go back to the time when our citizens were left to fend for themselves. Instead, we must go forward as one America, one nation working together to meet the challenges we face together. Self-reliance and teamwork are not opposing virtues; we must have both.

I believe our new, smaller government must work in an old-fashioned American way, together with all of our citizens through state and local governments, in the workplace, in religious, charitable and civic associations. Our goal must be to enable all our people to make the most of their own lives — with stronger families, more educational opportunity, economic security, safer streets, a cleaner environment in a safer world.

To improve the state of our Union, we must ask more of ourselves, we must expect more of each other, and we must face our challenges together.

Here, in this place, our responsibility begins with balancing the budget in a way that is fair to all Americans. There is now broad bipartisan agreement that permanent deficit spending must come to an end.

I compliment the Republican leadership and the membership for the energy and determination you have brought to this task of balancing the budget. And I thank the Democrats for passing the largest deficit reduction plan in history in 1993, which has already cut the deficit nearly in half in three years.

Since 1993, we have all begun to see the benefits of deficit reduction. Lower interest rates have made it easier for businesses to borrow and to invest and to create new jobs. Lower interest rates have brought down the cost of home mortgages, car payments, and credit card rates to ordinary citizens. Now it is time to finish the job and balance the budget.

Though differences remain among us which are significant, the combined total of the proposed savings that are common to both plans is more than enough, using the numbers from your Congressional Budget Office, to balance the budget in seven years and to provide a modest tax cut.

These cuts are real. They will require sacrifice from everyone. But these cuts do not undermine our fundamental obligations to our parents, our children, and our future, by endangering Medicare, or Medicaid, or education, or the environment, or by raising taxes on working families.

I have said before, and let me say again, many good ideas have come out of our negotiations. I have learned a lot about the way both Republicans and Democrats view the debate before us. I have learned a lot about the good ideas that we could all embrace.

We ought to resolve our remaining differences. I am willing to work to resolve them. I am ready to meet tomorrow. But I ask you to consider that we should at least enact these savings that both plans have in common and give the American people their balanced budget, a tax cut, lower interest rates, and a brighter future. We should do that now and make permanent deficits yesterday's legacy.

Now it is time for us to look also to the challenges of today and tomorrow, beyond the burdens of yesterday. The challenges are significant. But America was built on challenges, not promises. And when we work together to meet them, we never fail. That is the key to a more perfect Union. Our individual dreams must be realized by our common efforts.

Tonight I want to speak to you about the challenges we all face as a people.

Our first challenge is to cherish our children and strengthen America's families. Family is the foundation of American life. If we have stronger families, we will have a stronger America.

Before I go on, I would like to take just a moment to thank my own family, and to thank the person who has taught me more than anyone else over 25 years about the importance of families and children — a wonderful wife, a magnificent mother, and a great First Lady. Thank you, Hillary.

All strong families begin with taking more responsibility for our children. I have heard Mrs. Gore say that it's hard to be a parent today, but it's even harder to be a child. So all of us, not just as parents, but all of us in our other roles — our media, our schools, our teachers, our communities, our churches and synagogues, our businesses, our governments — all of us have a responsibility to help our children to make it and to make the most of their lives and their God-given capacities.

To the media, I say you should create movies and CDs and television shows you would want your own children and grandchildren to enjoy.

I call on Congress to pass the requirement for a V-chip in TV sets so that parents can screen out programs they believe are inappropriate for their children. When parents control what their young children see, that is not censorship; that is enabling parents to assume more personal responsibility for their children's upbringing. And I urge them to do it. The V-chip requirement is part of the important telecommunications bill now pending in this Congress. It has bipartisan support, and I urge you to pass it now.

To make the V-chip work, I challenge the broadcast industry to do what movies have done — to identify your programming in ways that help parents to protect their children. And I invite the leaders of major media corporations in the entertainment industry to come to the White House next month to work with us in a positive way on concrete ways to improve what our children see on television. I am ready to work with you.

I say to those who make and market cigarettes: every year a million children take up smoking, even though it is against the law. Three hundred thousand of them will have their lives shortened as a result. Our Administration has taken steps to stop the massive marketing campaigns that appeal to our children. We are simply saying: Market your products to adults, if you wish, but draw the line on children.

I say to those who are on welfare, and especially to those who have been trapped on welfare for a long time: For too

long our welfare system has undermined the values of family and work, instead of supporting them. The Congress and I are near agreement on sweeping welfare reform. We agree on time limits, tough work requirements, and the toughest possible child support enforcement. But I believe we must also provide child care so that mothers who are required to go to work can do so without worrying about what is happening to their children.

I challenge this Congress to send me a bipartisan welfare reform bill that will really move people from welfare to work and do the right thing by our children. I will sign it immediately.

Let us be candid about this difficult problem. Passing a law, even the best possible law, is only a first step. The next step is to make it work. I challenge people on welfare to make the most of this opportunity for independence. I challenge American businesses to give people on welfare the chance to move into the work force. I applaud the work of religious groups and others who care for the poor. More than anyone else in our society, they know the true difficulty of the task before us, and they are in a position to help. Every one of us should join them. That is the only way we can make real welfare reform a reality in the lives of the American people.

To strengthen the family we must do everything we can to keep the teen pregnancy rate going down. I am gratified, as I'm sure all Americans are, that it has dropped for two years in a row. But we all know it is still far too high.

Tonight I am pleased to announce that a group of prominent Americans is responding to that challenge by forming an organization that will support grass-roots community efforts all across our country in a national campaign against teen pregnancy. And I challenge all of us and every American to join their efforts.

I call on American men and women in families to give greater respect to one another. We must end the deadly scourge of domestic violence in our country. And I challenge America's families to work harder to stay together. For families who stay together not only do better economically, their children do better as well.

In particular, I challenge the fathers of this country to love and care for their children. If your family has separated, you must pay your child support. We're doing more than ever to make sure you do, and we're going to do more, but let's all admit something about that, too: A check will not substitute for a parent's love and guidance. And only you — only you can make the decision to help raise your children. No matter who you are, how low or high your station in life, it is the most basic human duty of every American to do that job to the best of his or her ability.

Our second challenge is to provide Americans with the educational opportunities we will all need for this new century. In our schools, every classroom in America must be connected to the Information Superhighway, with computers and good software and well-trained teachers. We are working with the telecommunications industry, educators, and parents to connect 20 percent of California's classrooms by this spring, and every classroom and every library in the entire United States by the year 2000. I ask Congress to support this education technology initiative so that we can make sure this national partnership succeeds.

Every diploma ought to mean something. I challenge every community, every school and every state to adopt national standards of excellence; to measure whether schools are meeting those standards; to cut bureaucratic red tape so that schools and teachers have more flexibility for grass-roots reform; and to hold them accountable for results. That's what our Goals 2000 initiative is all about.

I challenge every state to give all parents the right to choose which public school their children will attend; and to let teachers form new schools with a charter they can keep only if they do a good job.

I challenge all our schools to teach character education, to teach good values and good citizenship. And if it means that teenagers will stop killing each other over designer jackets, then our public schools should be able to require their students to wear school uniforms.

I challenge our parents to become their children's first teachers. Turn off the TV. See that the homework is done. And visit your children's classrooms. No program, no teacher, no one else can do that for you.

My fellow Americans, higher education is more important today than ever before. We've created a new student loan program that's made it easier to borrow and repay those loans, and we have dramatically cut the student loan default rate. That's something we should all be proud of because it was unconscionably high just a few years ago. Through AmeriCorps, our national service program, this year 25,000 young people will earn college money by serving their local communities to improve

the lives of their friends and neighbors. These initiatives are right for America, and we should keep them going.

And we should also work hard to open the doors of college even wider. I challenge Congress to expand work-study and help one million young Americans work their way through college by the year 2000; to provide a \$1000 merit scholarship for the top five percent of graduates in every high school in the United States; to expand Pell Grant scholarships for deserving and needy students; and to make up to \$10,000 a year of college tuition tax deductible. It's a good idea for America.

Our third challenge is to help every American who is willing to work for it, achieve economic security in this new age. People who work hard still need support to get ahead in the new economy. They need education and training for a lifetime. They need more support for families raising children. They need retirement security. They need access to health care. More and more Americans are finding that the education of their childhood simply doesn't last a lifetime.

So I challenge Congress to consolidate 70 overlapping, antiquated job-training programs into a simple voucher worth \$2,600 for unemployed or underemployed workers to use as they please for community college tuition or other training. This is a G.I. Bill for America's workers we should all be able to agree on.

More and more Americans are working hard without a raise. Congress sets the minimum wage. Within a year, the minimum wage will fall to a 40-year low in purchasing power. Four dollars and 25 cents an hour is no longer a living wage, but millions of Americans and their children are trying to live on it. I challenge you to raise their minimum wage.

In 1993, Congress cut the taxes of 15 million hard-pressed working families to make sure that no parents who work full-time would have to raise their children in poverty, and to encourage people to move from welfare to work. This expanded earned income tax credit is now worth about \$1,800 a year to a family of four living on \$20,000. The budget bill I vetoed would have reversed this achievement and raised taxes on nearly 8 million of these people. We should not do that.

I also agree that the people who are helped under this initiative are not all those in our country who are working hard to do a good job raising their children and at work. I agree that we need a tax credit for working families with children. That's one of the things most of us in this Chamber, I hope, can agree on. I know it is strongly supported by the Republican majority. And it should be part of any final budget agreement.

I want to challenge every business that can possibly afford it to provide pensions for your employees. And I challenge Congress to pass a proposal recommended by the White House Conference on Small Business that would make it easier for small businesses and farmers to establish their own pension plans. That is something we should all agree on.

We should also protect existing pension plans. Two years ago, with bipartisan support that was almost unanimous on both sides of the aisle, we moved to protect the pensions of 8 million working people and to stabilize the pensions of 32 million more. Congress should not now let companies endanger those workers' pension funds. I know the proposal to liberalize the ability of employers to take money out of pension funds for other purposes would raise money for the treasury. But I believe it is false economy. I vetoed that proposal last year, and I would have to do so again.

Finally, if our working families are going to succeed in the new economy, they must be able to buy health insurance policies that they do not lose when they change jobs or when someone in their family gets sick. Over the past two years, over one million Americans in working families have lost their health insurance. We have to do more to make health care available to every American. And Congress should start by passing the bipartisan bill sponsored by Senator Kennedy and Senator Kassebaum that would require insurance companies to stop dropping people when they switch jobs, and stop denying coverage for preexisting conditions. Let's all do that.

And even as we enact savings in these programs, we must have a common commitment to preserve the basic protections of Medicare and Medicaid — not just to the poor, but to people in working families, including children, people with disabilities, people with AIDS, and senior citizens in nursing homes.

In the past three years, we've saved \$15 billion just by fighting health care fraud and abuse. We have all agreed to save much more. We have all agreed to stabilize the Medicare Trust Fund. But we must not abandon our fundamental obligations to the people who need Medicare and Medicaid. America cannot become stronger if they become weaker.

The G.I. Bill for workers, tax relief for education and child rearing, pension availability and protection, access to health care, preservation of Medicare and Medicaid — these things, along with the Family and Medical Leave Act passed in 1993 — these things will help responsible, hard-working American families to make the most of their own lives.

But employers and employees must do their part, as well, as they are doing in so many of our finest companies — working together, putting the long-term prosperity ahead of the short-term gain. As workers increase their hours and their productivity, employers should make sure they get the skills they need and share the benefits of the good years, as well as the burdens of the bad ones. When companies and workers work as a team they do better, and so does America.

Our fourth great challenge is to take our streets back from crime and gangs and drugs. At last we have begun to find a way to reduce crime, forming community partnerships with local police forces to catch criminals and prevent crime. This strategy, called community policing, is clearly working. Violent crime is coming down all across America. In New York City, murders are down 25 percent; in St. Louis, 18 percent; in Seattle, 32 percent. But we still have a long way to go before our streets are safe and our people are free from fear.

The Crime Bill of 1994 is critical to the success of community policing. It provides funds for 100,000 new police in communities of all sizes. We're already a third of the way there. And I challenge the Congress to finish the job. Let us stick with a strategy that's working and keep the crime rate coming down.

Community policing also requires bonds of trust between citizens and police. I ask all Americans to respect and support our law enforcement officers. And to our police, I say, our children need you as role models and heroes. Don't let them down.

The Brady Bill has already stopped 44,000 people with criminal records from buying guns. The assault weapons ban is keeping 19 kinds of assault weapons out of the hands of violent gangs. I challenge the Congress to keep those laws on the books.

Our next step in the fight against crime is to take on gangs the way we once took on the mob. I'm directing the FBI and other investigative agencies to target gangs that involve juveniles in violent crime and to seek authority to prosecute as adults teenagers who maim and kill like adults.

And I challenge local housing authorities and tenant associations: Criminal gang members and drug dealers are destroying the lives of decent tenants. From now on, the rule for residents who commit crime and peddle drugs should be one strike and you're out.

I challenge every state to match federal policy to assure that serious violent criminals serve at least 85 percent of their sentence.

More police and punishment are important, but they're not enough. We have got to keep more of our young people out of trouble, with prevention strategies not dictated by Washington, but developed in communities. I challenge all of our communities, all of our adults, to give our children futures to say, "Yes" to. And I challenge Congress not to abandon the Crime Bill's support of these grass-roots prevention efforts.

Finally, to reduce crime and violence, we have to reduce the drug problem. The challenge begins in our homes, with parents talking to their children openly and firmly. It embraces our churches and synagogues, our youth groups and our schools.

I challenge Congress not to cut our support for drug-free schools. People like the D.A.R.E. officers are making a real impression on grade-school children that will give them the strength to say no when the time comes.

Meanwhile, we continue our efforts to cut the flow of drugs into America. For the last two years, one man in particular has been on the front lines of that effort. Tonight I am nominating him — a hero of the Persian Gulf War and the Commander in Chief of the United States Military Southern Command — General Barry McCaffrey, as America's new Drug Czar.

General McCaffrey has earned three Purple Hearts and two Silver Stars fighting for this country. Tonight I ask that he lead our nation's battle against drugs at home and abroad. To succeed, he needs a force far larger than he has ever commanded before. He needs all of us. Every one of us has a role to play on this team.

Thank you, General McCaffrey, for agreeing to serve your country one more time.

Our fifth challenge: to leave our environment safe and clean for the next generation. Because of a generation of bipartisan effort, we do have cleaner water and air, lead levels in children's blood have been cut by 70 percent, toxic emissions from factories cut in half. Lake Erie was dead, and now it's a thriving resource. But 10 million children under

12 still live within four miles of a toxic waste dump. A third of us breathe air that endangers our health. And in too many communities, the water is not safe to drink. We still have much to do.

Yet Congress has voted to cut environmental enforcement by 25 percent. That means more toxic chemicals in our water, more smog in our air, more pesticides in our food. Lobbyists for polluters have been allowed to write their own loopholes into bills to weaken laws that protect the health and safety of our children. Some say that the taxpayer should pick up the tab for toxic waste and let polluters who can afford to fix it off the hook. I challenge Congress to reexamine those policies and to reverse them.

This issue has not been a partisan issue. The most significant environmental gains in the last 30 years were made under a Democratic Congress and President Richard Nixon. We can work together. We have to believe some basic things. Do you believe we can expand the economy without hurting the environment? I do. Do you believe we can create more jobs over the long run by cleaning the environment up? I know we can. That should be our commitment.

We must challenge businesses and communities to take more initiative in protecting the environment, and we have to make it easier for them to do it. To businesses this Administration is saying: If you can find a cheaper, more efficient way than government regulations require to meet tough pollution standards, do it — as long as you do it right. To communities we say: We must strengthen community right-to-know laws requiring polluters to disclose their emissions, but you have to use the information to work with business to cut pollution. People do have a right to know that their air and their water are safe.

Our sixth challenge is to maintain America's leadership in the fight for freedom and peace throughout the world. Because of American leadership, more people than ever before live free and at peace. And Americans have known 50 years of prosperity and security.

We owe thanks especially to our veterans of World War II. I would like to say to Senator Bob Dole and to all others in this Chamber who fought in World War II, and to all others on both sides of the aisle who have fought bravely in all our conflicts since: I salute your service, and so do the American people.

All over the world, even after the Cold War, people still look to us and trust us to help them seek the blessings of peace and freedom. But as the Cold War fades into memory, voices of isolation say America should retreat from its responsibilities. I say they are wrong.

The threats we face today as Americans respect no nation's borders. Think of them: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious hatred, aggression by rogue states, environmental degradation. If we fail to address these threats today, we will suffer the consequences in all our tomorrows.

Of course, we can't be everywhere. Of course, we can't do everything. But where our interests and our values are at stake, and where we can make a difference, America must lead. We must not be isolationist.

We must not be the world's policeman. But we can and should be the world's very best peacemaker. By keeping our military strong, by using diplomacy where we can and force where we must, by working with others to share the risk and the cost of our efforts, America is making a difference for people here and around the world. For the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there is not a single Russian missile pointed at America's children.

North Korea has now frozen its dangerous nuclear weapons program. In Haiti, the dictators are gone, democracy has a new day, the flow of desperate refugees to our shores has subsided. Through tougher trade deals for America — over 80 of them — we have opened markets abroad, and now exports are at an all-time high, growing faster than imports and creating good American jobs.

We stood with those taking risks for peace: In Northern Ireland, where Catholic and Protestant children now tell their parents, violence must never return. In the Middle East, where Arabs and Jews who once seemed destined to fight forever now share knowledge and resources, and even dreams.

And we stood up for peace in Bosnia. Remember the skeletal prisoners, the mass graves, the campaign to rape and torture, the endless lines of refugees, the threat of a spreading war. All these threats, all these horrors have now begun to give way to the promise of peace. Now, our troops and a strong NATO, together with our new partners from Central Europe and elsewhere, are helping that peace to take hold.

As all of you know, I was just there with a bipartisan congressional group, and I was so proud not only of what our troops were doing, but of the pride they evidenced in what they were doing. They knew what America's mission in this world is, and they were proud to be carrying it out.

Through these efforts, we have enhanced the security of the American people. But make no mistake about it: important challenges remain.

The START II Treaty with Russia will cut our nuclear stockpiles by another 25 percent. I urge the Senate to ratify it — now. We must end the race to create new nuclear weapons by signing a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty — this year.

As we remember what happened in the Japanese subway, we can outlaw poison gas forever if the Senate ratifies the Chemical Weapons Convention — this year. We can intensify the fight against terrorists and organized criminals at home and abroad if Congress passes the anti-terrorism legislation I proposed after the Oklahoma City bombing — now. We can help more people move from hatred to hope all across the world in our own interest if Congress gives us the means to remain the world's leader for peace.

My fellow Americans, the six challenges I have just discussed are for all of us. Our seventh challenge is really America's challenge to those of us in this hallowed hall tonight: to reinvent our government and make our democracy work for them.

Last year this Congress applied to itself the laws it applies to everyone else. This Congress banned gifts and meals from lobbyists. This Congress forced lobbyists to disclose who pays them and what legislation they are trying to pass or kill. This Congress did that, and I applaud you for it.

Now I challenge Congress to go further — to curb special interest influence in politics by passing the first truly bipartisan campaign reform bill in a generation. You, Republicans and Democrats alike, can show the American people that we can limit spending and open the airwaves to all candidates.

I also appeal to Congress to pass the line-item veto you promised the American people.

Our administration is working hard to give the American people a government that works better and costs less. Thanks to the work of Vice President Gore, we are eliminating 16,000 pages of unnecessary rules and regulations, shifting more decision-making out of Washington, back to states and local communities.

As we move into the era of balanced budgets and smaller government, we must work in new ways to enable people to make the most of their own lives. We are helping America's communities, not with more bureaucracy, but with more opportunities. Through our successful Empowerment Zones and Community Development Banks, we are helping people to find jobs, to start businesses. And with tax incentives for companies that clean up abandoned industrial property, we can bring jobs back to places that desperately, desperately need them.

But there are some areas that the federal government should not leave and should address and address strongly. One of these areas is the problem of illegal immigration. After years of neglect, this administration has taken a strong stand to stiffen the protection of our borders. We are increasing border controls by 50 percent. We are increasing inspections to prevent the hiring of illegal immigrants. And tonight, I announce I will sign an executive order to deny federal contracts to businesses that hire illegal immigrants.

Let me be very clear about this: We are still a nation of immigrants; we should be proud of it. We should honor every legal immigrant here, working hard to become a new citizen. But we are also a nation of laws.

I want to say a special word now to those who work for our federal government. Today our federal government is 200,000 employees smaller than it was the day I took office as President.

Our federal government today is the smallest it has been in 30 years, and it's getting smaller every day. Most of our fellow Americans probably don't know that. And there is a good reason: The remaining federal work force is composed of Americans who are now working harder and working smarter than ever before, to make sure the quality of our services does not decline.

I'd like to give you one example. His name is Richard Dean. He is a 49 year-old Vietnam veteran who's worked for the Social Security Administration for 22 years now. Last year he was hard at work in the Federal Building in Oklahoma City when

the blast killed 169 people and brought the rubble down all around him. He reentered that building four times. He saved the lives of three women. He's here with us this evening, and I want to recognize Richard and applaud both his public service and his extraordinary personal heroism.

But Richard Dean's story doesn't end there. This last November, he was forced out of his office when the government shut down. And the second time the government shut down he continued helping Social Security recipients, but he was working without pay.

On behalf of Richard Dean and his family, and all the other people who are out there working every day doing a good job for the American people, I challenge all of you in this Chamber: Never, ever shut the federal government down again.

On behalf of all Americans, especially those who need their Social Security payments at the beginning of March, I also challenge the Congress to preserve the full faith and credit of the United States — to honor the obligations of this great nation as we have for 220 years; to rise above partisanship and pass a straightforward extension of the debt limit and show people America keeps its word.

I know that this evening I have asked a lot of Congress, and even more from America. But I am confident: When Americans work together in their homes, their schools, their churches, their synagogues, their civic groups, their workplace, they can meet any challenge.

I say again, the era of big government is over. But we can't go back to the era of fending for yourself. We have to go forward to the era of working together as a community, as a team, as one America, with all of us reaching across these lines that divide us — the division, the discrimination, the rancor — we have to reach across it to find common ground. We have got to work together if we want America to work.

I want you to meet two more people tonight who do just that. Lucius Wright is a teacher in the Jackson, Mississippi, public school system. A Vietnam veteran, he has created groups to help inner-city children turn away from gangs and build futures they can believe in. Sergeant Jennifer Rodgers is a police officer in Oklahoma City. Like Richard Dean, she helped to pull her fellow citizens out of the rubble and deal with that awful tragedy. She reminds us that in their response to that atrocity the people of Oklahoma City lifted all of us with their basic sense of decency and community.

Lucius Wright and Jennifer Rodgers are special Americans. And I have the honor to announce tonight that they are the very first of several thousand Americans who will be chosen to carry the Olympic torch on its long journey from Los Angeles to the centennial of the modern Olympics in Atlanta this summer — not because they are star athletes, but because they are star citizens, community heroes meeting America's challenges. They are our real champions.

Now, each of us must hold high the torch of citizenship in our own lives. None of us can finish the race alone. We can only achieve our destiny together — one hand, one generation, one American connecting to another.

There have always been things we could do together — dreams we could make real — which we could never have done on our own. We Americans have forged our identity, our very union, from every point of view and every point on the planet, from every different opinion. But we must be bound together by a faith more powerful than any doctrine that divides us — by our belief in progress, our love of liberty, and our relentless search for common ground.

America has always sought and always risen to every challenge. Who would say that, having come so far together, we will not go forward from here? Who would say that this age of possibility is not for all Americans?

Our country is and always has been a great and good nation. But the best is yet to come, if we all do our part.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

The following is an excerpt from a speech by President Clinton outlining his key accomplishments, future challenges, and vision for the 21st century. Please feel free to use it as a guide when you are speaking about our progress and why this election is so important to America's families.

Excerpt from the President's Speech to Ohio Democrats

Columbus, Ohio
March 23, 1996

... And for all those who would argue against your political preferences, let me just remind you of where we were four or five years ago when the deficit was more than twice as high as it is; when the unemployment rate was two points higher; when it seemed like the only new jobs that were coming into the economy were low-wage jobs. Now, I don't pretend that we solved all of the problems, but we do have over 8 million new jobs, just like I said. We have cut the deficit, just like I said; and wages are going up again in America for the first time in a decade. And that's something to run on.

The other side said that if our economic plan passed, it would bring a disaster to America. They were wrong. We don't need to go back to their strategies. They gave us the disaster for America the last time they had the economy. On the other hand, we don't need to stand pat, either, as they tried to do in 1992. This is a record to build on, not to stand on.

We have to meet the challenges of all those Americans out there who do not feel strong and certain about the future. They are basically three groups of Americans: The first group is the people that live in inner-city neighborhoods and isolated rural areas where nobody has invested money yet. We need to give these people tax incentives so they can use their money to create private-sector jobs to grow the economy there. We need to put in banks to loan money to people there. If we can provide incentives to invest in foreign countries, we should provide incentives to invest in the heartland of America's neighborhoods.

The second group of Americans are the ones who

are working harder and harder at hourly wages and never seem to get a raise. And there are a lot of them. And what do we have to do with them? For one thing, we should do no harm. We should reject the other side's budget proposal that would actually reduce the family tax credit that is now providing tax relief to families with incomes under \$28,000 a year.

The second thing we should do is raise the minimum wage. Both political parties in America, and most politicians, talk about family values. That's a good thing to talk about; it's a good thing to be for. There's nothing more important. But there are millions of people out there, my fellow Americans, who are trying to raise their children on \$4.25 an hour. You can't do that; that's not a family value. We should raise the minimum wage instead of letting it go to a 40-year low.

We should give these people the certainty that we are fighting for a growing economy, and we're trying to open new markets. We have concluded 200 trade agreements since I have been President—20 with Japan. And in the areas where we've made new trade agreements with Japan, our exports have gone up by 80 percent. We've got to give Americans a fair break and not let them be worked over in the global economy.

We should give these families a real tax break. And one of the things we should give them is a tax deduction for the cost of all education after high school — a college tax break.

Then there's a third group of people. You've been reading a lot about them lately. They're the people that

work for big corporations that are downsizing. What about them? Some of them are average-income working people, some of them look like me—they're 50-year-old white and gray-headed men who worked for these companies for 25 or 30 years, and all of a sudden the company says, "We don't need you anymore. I know you've got two kids about ready to go to college, I know you've got problems, but we're sorry, you have to go." What about them?

There are several things that we can do. For one thing, there are a lot of companies that don't do that to their employees. Let's look at them and find out how they do it and give other companies incentives to treat their folks in a good, positive way.

Then we should say that if a person loses their job in America, they ought to immediately receive a voucher from the federal government worth about \$2,500 a year that they can take to the nearest community college to immediately go back and learn a new skill and start a new life. And if you lose your job or if someone in your family gets sick, we ought to change the law, so that you don't lose your health insurance anymore, and you can keep it when you lose your job.

And if you go to work for a small company, you should be able to take out a pension plan that you don't lose even if you lose your job. People should be able to carry those pensions with them and keep them for a lifetime and protect themselves in their retirement.

My fellow Americans, we have to face the challenges of the future because everybody has to know that we can benefit from the new global economy. I am grateful for the 8.4 million jobs. I am grateful that we have set a new record in business formation every year since I've been President. I'm glad that we're number one in selling automobiles and semiconductors again. I'm glad that the World Economic Forum in Europe says that we've gone from fifth place before I became President to having the most productive economy in the world for the last three years; I'm glad about that.

But I won't be satisfied until, working together, we have created the opportunity for every American who will

work for it to make the most of his or her own life and to give all of the kids in this country a better future. You shouldn't be, either.

Let me say that a big part of that is also getting back to our basic values, to making our communities and our families stronger. We have to help people raise their kids. That's why I was for the family tax credit. This year, 17 million families with incomes under \$28,000 a year will have lower taxes because of that '93 economic plan. That's why I was for the V-chip in the Telecommunications Bill so that parents would have more control over what their children see on television. I think that's important.

That's why our Administration was the first in history to say that we have to do something about the biggest health problem our young people face today: underage smoking. Three thousand young people illegally start smoking every day, and 1,000 of them will die sooner because of it, and we ought to stop it if we can. We've got to do something about it.

And we have to do something to make our streets safer. I'm glad that the crime rate is down and the welfare rolls are down and the food stamp rolls are down and the poverty rolls are down and the teen pregnancy rate is down. I'm glad about that, but they're all too high, and you know it. We cannot be satisfied until you turn on the evening news at night and if you see that a terrible crime has been committed, you are surprised by it instead of numb to it. That's when we will know we have whipped the crime problem.

And so I say to you, we need a combination of things. First, let's do what we know works. The Fraternal Order of Police, which has one of the biggest chapters in the country here in Ohio, and all of the other law enforcement officers in this country, helped us write the Crime Bill that Congress tried to undo a couple of days ago. And we joined with them, and with people that work on crime in the community, and we asked, "What works?" Community policing works—put more police on the streets, put them in the neighborhoods, put them in the school yards, let people know their neighbors. They can lower the crime rate. All over America, in city after city where people had given up on stopping crime, the murder

rate is down, and violence is down. We can do better. We have to do more of that.

We also said that we ought to have tougher laws to punish people who commit serious crimes. We should have a “three strikes and you’re out” law. But for kids who get in trouble the first time, we need to try to give them a chance to recover their lives by giving them something to say “yes” to.

Let me tell you again, it is a sign of the times: The crime rate is down, but the rate of violence among children under 18 is up. There are too many kids out there raising themselves, and we need to support each other in giving them their childhoods back. We have to do it.

There has been a lot of talk in Ohio about welfare reform. The welfare rolls are down since this Administration came in. And even though Congress has not yet passed a welfare reform bill that I can sign — that is tough on work, but good to children— we have, on our own, given 37 states the permission to get rid of federal rules and allowed them to find their own ways to move people from welfare to work. Three out of four people on welfare today are under welfare reform experiments approved by this Administration. That is more than the last two administrations of the other party did put together. We are moving people from welfare to work.

We are also doing something we should do more of. This Administration has taken the lead in giving America record amounts of child-support collections. We can move people off welfare if parents pay what they owe to raise their own kids, and we should insist upon it.

If we want America to be what it should be, we also have to give our children clean air, clean water, safe food, and a decent environment for the future. For years, there was a serious debate about that. There is no longer a serious debate; we now know we can grow the economy by protecting the environment. And that is what I plan to do.

And let me say to you, it is not necessary to stop the cleanup of toxic waste sites to balance the budget. There are millions of children who live within three or four miles of toxic waste dumps. We don’t need to balance the

budget by weakening the laws on safe food and clean air and clean water. It is not necessary to undermine the enforcement of our nation’s environmental standards in order to balance the budget, and I will not do it. I will not tolerate it; it is wrong. It is wrong.

Now, my fellow Americans, we also have to realize that much as we’d like to, just because the Cold War is over, we can’t walk away from the rest of the world.

I know a lot of people, even in this room, have disagreed with some of the decisions I have made in foreign policy. But let me tell you, we are the world’s only superpower now. We must try not to meddle. There are some things we can’t do. We don’t want to be the world’s policeman, but we can’t walk away. We have to try to be the world’s peacemaker. And every time we make peace— every time we make peace for people in other parts of the world, we ensure that we will be a little safer.

Let me tell you, no great nation can hide from terrorism. We saw it at the World Trade Center in New York. We saw it in Oklahoma City. And when you see bombs blow up innocent civilians in Israel or in London, just remember this: In the world we’re living in, with computer technology, and open borders, one of our biggest challenges is preventing organized criminals, and the people who smuggle weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, from coming together and working together. I am determined that that will not happen, and I intend to keep us involved with every freedom-loving country in the world that will stand up to the terrorists and the thugs that would rob innocent people of their future.

Now, it is in that context that you must see this choice. I don’t want to sit on this record. I want to build on it. I want more change, not less. I want a government that is smaller and less bureaucratic. We have given you the smallest government — not the other party that always cursed the federal government. The Democrats have given you the smallest national government in 30 years and the biggest reduction in regulations.

Now, you have to see this election in these terms. They can say, “Oh, old Veto Bill.” You bet, and I’m proud

of it. And I'd do it again. I want you to look at where the budget negotiations were when Congress left Washington to go finish their campaign. They had acknowledged that we didn't need big Medicare and Medicaid cuts, that we didn't have to gut education or environmental protection; that we didn't have to raise taxes on working people; we don't have to raise pension funds; we don't have to do those things.

Remember, there is no longer a choice between the status quo and change. There are two real different views of change here. They say the government is the problem; just get out of the way and let things take their course. I say, you remember what happened 100 years ago? The progressive movement that culminated in Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson— that progressive movement started under a Republican, Teddy Roosevelt. They abandoned him and his tradition, and we shouldn't make the same mistakes. We have to stand up for that.

I believe that the government of the United States has to, first, make us secure; second, give us a growing

economy; and, third, work in partnerships with the American people so that individuals, families and communities can make the most of their own lives and meet the challenges of this uncertain world. That is the difference between our campaign and theirs. It is clear, unambiguous, and true.

So I want you to think about it. Yes, I vetoed that budget, and I'd do it again. But I don't like it. I'd rather sign the right kind of balanced budget that will lower interest rates, balance the budget, grow the economy, and give our kids a future. That's what I did. And that's the way I feel about welfare reform and health care reform and all of these other things.

I want to work with Congress. But the main thing I want is to give you the kind of future you need and deserve. So, if you are willing to stand up and fight one more time, we can have an American Dream for all Americans in the 21st century. We can have family values. We can have a free and safe America. We can have a better future.

Thank you, and God bless you all.