

## Remarks at a Bush-Quayle Fundraising Dinner in Philadelphia May 11, 1992

Thank you all. And Peter, thank you very much for that wonderfully warm introduction and for making me feel so welcome. I loved walking out through that crowd because it gave me a chance to see so many people who have been so supportive over the years, and I am very, very grateful to you. Barbara and I count our blessings, even in complicated times, and I am very privileged to serve as President of the United States. Believe me, I'll never forget how I got there. It was good, strong, loyal friends out in the precincts and at dinners like this over the years, and I am very grateful to all of you.

May I thank Reverend Gambet for his invocation; it was a unique invocation, and I kind of went along with the last part and could learn from the first part, but—[laughter]—and Malcolm Evans for the national anthem. I missed the Pledge of Allegiance crowd. I hear they were absolutely fantastic, and some of them are back there, but thank you very much for a unique joint Pledge of Allegiance. And I want to thank Peter and David here for making this dinner happen. Of course, Senator Specter, I'm just very pleased to have been with him today in what for, I think, both of us was a very moving tour through some of the less privileged, some of the impacted parts of this great city. Larry Coughlin is with us, who is our Bush-Quayle cochairman; Congressmen Weldon and Ridge and Ritter, all good people. We've got a great Republican delegation from Pennsylvania, I might add, in the United States Congress.

I was delighted to see Barbara Hafer earlier on. And, of course, Governor Mike Castle, an old friend who's done a great job in a neighboring State with us tonight. And I'd be remiss if I didn't single out Elsie Hillman, heading the campaign effort here in the Keystone State, and thank Dexter and then, of course, our team of Bobby Holt, Wally Ganzi. And then again, I'll single out Dexter, who gets the star seat. He gets to sit next to Elsie, and that means he sold more tickets than anybody else. So that's

terrific. And, of course, Charlie, Charlie Kopp, he is a fundraising czar. He is our finance chairman, a great friend, and a loyal, loyal supporter. And he is very successful—so successful that he didn't have to go to our dog Millie for a single dime. [Laughter] You may have seen our income tax returns, and you can tell who earns the money in the family. Millie is not a "fat cat," but nevertheless has done a great job as our dog. [Laughter]

I am pleased to be here. And I want to share with you just some observations. This is a year where you're hearing a lot of talk about change. And I would be the first to concede that we must make significant change in this country. I hear a lot of talk about it coming out of the political arena, but we've been trying to effect constructive change.

I came back from a very moving visit to Los Angeles; we got back Friday evening. And let me just give you a short report of what I saw and what I heard. Each one of us saw the images of hate and horror. That was all around you, images that we won't soon forget. But what I saw during my time in Los Angeles, even in the hardest hit parts of south central L.A., should give us some cause for hope. Everywhere, the people I talked with told about acts of individual heroism, about the extraordinary courage of just plain ordinary people. And some braved the gang of looters to form these bucket brigades to put out fires when the firetrucks couldn't get through. And then some stood up in the face of angry mobs and reached across the barrier of color to save lives of their fellow men and women. And many of these aren't the stories that you'll see on the nightly news. But believe me, they are the stories that tell us the power of simple human decency.

What it tells me is that the time has come to set the old, worn-out ideas aside. And the time has come, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "to think anew and to act anew." And we start with the principles at the heart of this great Republican Party, princi-

ples that tell us something very obvious, and that is that we ought to keep the power close to the people, that we've got to strengthen families.

I'll never forget when Tom Bradley, the Mayor of Los Angeles, and others came to see me, large-city mayors, small-city mayors, Republicans, Democrats, liberals and conservatives joined, their National League of Cities. And they came and they said the one thing that united them in terms that they all agreed on was that the fundamental problem that the decline of the American family is causing in the cities. The prime cause of much of the unrest, the problems of crime, whatever, comes from the dissolution of the American family.

And we think we've got to find ways to strengthen that, instill character and values in our young people; that we must encourage entrepreneurship, ownership, increase investment, and create jobs. Now, these aims have got to form the heart of our agenda for economic opportunity, an agenda that can literally restore hope, can't solve the problem overnight but restore hope to our inner cities. And they define what we must do.

First, and let's be very clear on this one, we have got to preserve order. We've got to keep the peace because families can't thrive, children can't live, and jobs can't flourish in a climate of fear. And I support the police. I saw the commissioner here today, had a great—I see Governor Martinez, the head of our drug effort, here with him. He and I were together with the Senator and others. And I told the commissioner and told the people out here, "We support your efforts." They put themselves in harm's way to save all of us. And we must start by standing strongly for order and keeping the peace.

Now, those thoughts were foremost in my mind from the first hours of the violence in Los Angeles. A civilized society simply cannot tackle any of the really tough problems in the midst of chaos. It's just that simple. Violence and brutality destroy order. They destroy the rule of law. They must never be rationalized. And it must be condemned, violence, whenever you find it; we must condemn it as a society.

When I was out in Los Angeles, I called

a woman that had been a member of our little church in Houston, Texas, St. Martin's Parish. I'd got a message to call her. I called her, and she told me a tragic story of her brother and her son. They had gotten a call from a neighbor, a minority, a member of a minority group, and they'd climbed on their motorcycle and driven down to see this person. On the way, their motorcycle was surrounded by a gang. The motorcycle was upended. Her son was beaten. Somebody put a gun up to this kid's head, pulled the trigger, and it didn't go off. Her brother, not so lucky. He was beaten, and they put a gun up to his head, and he was killed right on the spot. This didn't have anything to do with Rodney King. This didn't have anything to do with anything other than wanton violence. We simply cannot be asked to condone that in our society. And so we're going to stand for—[*applause*]

In Los Angeles, I announced an addition to a program that's already at work here in Philadelphia, an exciting program that we saw today, an initiative that I call "Weed and Seed." The idea is to weed out the gang leaders and drug dealers and career criminals and then seed the community with expanded employment, educational, and social services. So we're going to push for that. I'm going to push and try to see that we can do more for the American people with this innovative new program.

Secondly, we must spark an economic revival in urban America. The best answer to poverty is a job with dignity in the private sector, and that means establishing what we call enterprise zones in our inner cities. It means reforming our welfare system, putting an end to the pervasive disincentives that encourage welfare and discourage work. So, enterprise zones and reform of welfare.

Thirdly, we've got to revolutionize American education. I might add, parenthetically, that I wish Barbara was here to see what you're doing with this show of support for literacy. Mr. Notebaert, wherever he may be, I would like to make this contribution. I'm not trying to sell this. [*Laughter*] This is "Millie's Book," and we want to donate this here as a contribution from the breadwinner in the Bush family. So please, we want

the record to show we brought a book in.

Now, we have a good education program. It burns me up when I hear some of the old thinkers, the pass-the-mandated-Federal-program thinkers, criticize. We have a program called America 2000. It's an innovative strategy, and it has things in it like choice. You can choose your colleges; why not choose your schools and thus make them more competitive?

Competition, community action, all of these things are a part of it. Children in our inner cities deserve the same opportunities that kids in the suburbs have, and that's what a lot of that program is about. That means we've got to break the power of the establishment, the education establishment. And whether it's public or private or religious, parents, not the government, should be free to choose their children's schools. I am going to fight for that concept.

Then another ingredient of our urban policy, and one I've been trying to get through for a long time, is homeownership. And I've never understood how anyone could be content with the present system, to take pride in the warehousing of the poor. The aim behind our HOPE initiative is to give poor families a stake, give them a stake in their communities, to give them something of value they can pass along to their kids, by turning public housing tenants into homeowners. And we are going to fight for that principle.

At every turn during my time in L.A., I heard people talking about the principles that guide these initiatives. And these weren't big shots; these were community leaders. These were people that were out there on the front line trying to help the kids. Personal responsibility, that was one; opportunity; ownership; independence; and then, of course, with great pride, dignity. And you know the sound of those words. We all do. It really adds up to the American dream.

And we all know what the critics will say, and you've heard it. They'll say, "Well, you've proposed all this before, Mr. President." And the answer: It's true. That's right. But now it is time to act on these proposals because this time they know we are right. We are right, and we want to get it passed through the Congress. Tomorrow

I'll be meeting with the leaders to try to get it done. It's no longer good enough to try the old ones. Let's try these new ideas and see if they can't help some of the kids that we saw today here in Philadelphia.

My first order of business is, then, to build a bipartisan effort in support of immediate action on this agenda. We won't settle for business-as-usual, measuring what we achieve by the size of the bureaucracy we build or the number of mandated programs we can send down to these communities who are crying out for flexibility. This time, we've got to put our principles to work and take the case for change directly to the American people.

What's going on in urban America is just one part, though, of a larger issue because the need for reform doesn't end simply with our inner cities. It starts with the revolution in American education that I mentioned. America 2000, we call it. It starts with that. When you get down to what we've got to do really to be competitive in the future, to offer kids an opportunity, it is education. And it includes our aggressive action, also, to break down barriers to free trade. Opening markets to American goods the world over has got to be a part of it. In each case, we've taken aim at the status quo, and we've set our sights on change. That's why I'm fighting hard for a GATT agreement. That's why we have proposed and are working with Mexico's able President, Carlos Salinas, to try to get a North American free trade agreement. It will mean more jobs for the United States, more jobs for Mexico, and a Mexico much better able to do what it must do with its environment and do what it must do in controlling its own borders.

America needs legal reform to put an end to these outrageous court awards that sap our economy and strain our civility. We've gotten to a point where doctors won't deliver babies, where fathers are afraid to coach Little League, all because of the fear of some frivolous lawsuit. That won't change until people spend less time suing each other and more time helping each other. And we've got to change the laws in Washington. We must and we will reform the legal system.

Now, we need health care reform and to open up access to affordable health care for all Americans. I was talking to Charlie about this a little earlier here. It used to be that going to the hospital didn't conjure up visions of financial suicide. Today, the cost of even minor surgery has gone right out through the roof. More than 30 million Americans have no health care coverage at all.

We can change that. And we can do it better than some of these nationalized programs that we're hearing about from the opposition. We have a comprehensive health care reform plan that will help us keep the quality health care. Make no mistake about it, people are still pouring into the United States for specialized care because they know we have the best quality health care in the entire world. So we want to keep the quality health care that makes us first in the world and at the same time open up access to all Americans.

Contrary to what the big Government folks say, we can do it without putting the Government in charge of everybody's health care. If you want to stand in line, you can go to the department of motor vehicles. You don't need to go for a nationalized health care program. Let's face it, national health care, in my view, literally would be a costly national disaster, and I am not going to let that happen. We are going to fight for our plan of reform that gives access to insurance to the poor and the middle-income people alike. That's what we need, and that's what I believe we'll be able to get when we take this case to the American people.

So far, I've spoken a little bit about what Government can do. So let me conclude by speaking about what society absolutely must do. Because there's something society must cultivate that Government cannot provide, something we can't legislate, something that we can't make happen by Government order. I'm talking about the moral sense that guides us all. In the simplest of terms—you want to get it to fundamentals—I'm talking about knowing right from wrong and then doing what's right.

You go back to Los Angeles for a minute. Time and again the people I met with there put their finger on one root cause for the turmoil we see, and that, of course, back

to the point, the dissolution of the family. And they're right. They're absolutely right. And ask yourself: What's the determining fact right now for whether a child has hope, stays in school, stays away from drugs? It is not Government spending. It's not the number of SBA loans or HUD grants. It's whether a child lives in a loving home with a mother and a father.

Barbara Bush was absolutely right when she said, "What happens in the White House doesn't matter half as much as what happens in your house." We have tried, both of us, augmented by tons of grandchildren, et cetera, to put the emphasis on American family, put that emphasis first.

That's why I keep coming back to the Good Samaritans that we have called and will continue to call Points of Light: Everybody here devoting some time to helping someone else in the community. The people who help the poor, the elderly, kids in trouble, and never ask a nickel in return. Government alone simply cannot create the scale and the energy needed to transform the lives of people in need. Let the cynics scoff about it, but we know these volunteers are the lifeblood of the American spirit.

And I wish you could have been with me today because you heard it: Community action. People overburdened with financial problems but finding time to help the guy next door. It was a wonderful thing we saw right here in some of the most impoverished areas of Philadelphia. It was a community spirit. Government has a role, but it never can supplant the propensity of one American to help another. So we've got to find ways to help in that concept and help encourage it.

I believe there is a great future in store because I believe that all of these principles will be coming into focus now. I believe we're right about family. I think we're right about freedom and free enterprise, and I think we're right about faith. Most of all, I think we are right about America's future.

You know, we've been through a very tough time. There's been a sluggish economy with recession in many parts of the country. I have a feeling this thing is beginning to move a little bit, and it's long over-

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due. I hope like heck I'm right this time, but I really do feel that it's beginning to move. And with that there will be a return of this innate feeling of American optimism. And when it happens, let's all vow that we will save time to help the other guy, to do what we can to be Points of Light.

We've got the strength. We've got the spirit in our Government. We've got it. You can sense it even in the ravaged communities of Los Angeles. We've got it in ourselves to transform America into the Nation we've dreamed of for generations. So don't listen to those doomsayers. Don't listen to those top 20 seconds that tell you everything that's wrong with the United States of America. We are the freest and the fairest and the best country on the face of the Earth. And we are going to get the job done.

We have nothing to be apologetic for. We've got big problems. But the message, I think, is if we can try this new approach, I believe we can solve them and offer hope to those little kids we saw with their eyes bulging as we came by there today into

these little community centers.

Thank you all very much for your support. Save a little energy for the campaign in the fall. I'm going to need you. But I believe we're going to win this election. Thank you very, very much.

*Note.* The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Hotel Atop the Bellevue. In his remarks, he referred to Peter Terpeluk, Jr., and David GirardiCarlo, dinner cochairmen; Representative Lawrence Coughlin, Bush-Quayle Pennsylvania cochairman; Barbara Hafer, Pennsylvania auditor-general; Elsie Hillman, Bush-Quayle Pennsylvania chairman; Dexter Baker, Bush-Quayle regional cochairman; Bobby Holt and Wally Ganzi, Bush-Quayle national finance cochairmen; Charlie Kopp, Bush-Quayle Pennsylvania finance chairman; Willie Williams, Philadelphia police commissioner; Bob Martinez, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy; and Edmond Notebaert, president and chief executive officer, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

## Statement on Urban Aid Initiatives

May 12, 1992

Today I am discussing with Congress a strategy to bring hope and opportunity to distressed communities. Our action is based on bedrock American values: personal responsibility, work, and family. We must end the cycle of dependency and give all Americans a place at the table of economic opportunity.

Clearly, the time has come to set aside old ideas and try something new. We in Government have a responsibility to act now to guarantee a hopeful future for the children of this Nation, a future where people are safe, neighborhoods can flourish, children can learn, and jobs can be created.

All Americans share the common goals of equal opportunity, advancement, and upward mobility. But the American dream is hindered by too many obstacles: unsafe cities, slow economic growth, an out-of-date education system, and dependency-creating

Government programs.

We must start with policies that refocus programs to serve those who are most needy and increase the effectiveness of Government services through innovation, competition, and choice. Our approach is a radical break with the policies of the past. But as Abraham Lincoln once said, "It is time to think and act anew."

My action plan consists of six core components:

(1) "Weed and Seed": Our families cannot thrive and jobs cannot flourish in a climate of lawlessness and fear. Our "Weed and Seed" initiative to combat crime wins back our inner cities by weeding out gang leaders, drug dealers, and career criminals and seeding communities with expanded employment, educational, and social services.