

to a lot of pork-laden additions to the bills. And I will sign them only if they comply with my budget request.

I also want to see action on some of the things that we've been talking to the American people about over the weekend. We should take a first bold step on legal reform. The civil justice reform legislation designed to change our current inefficient, costly legal system has been pending in Congress for over 7 months without even a hearing. And before adjourning, the Congress should at least seize the immediate opportunity, starting in the Senate this week, and pass the product liability reform bill.

And they can and should take a step, a first step, a needed first step on enacting a health care reform bill by passing portions of my plan, including the small business reform and the medical malpractice reform. These are key ingredients. Time is short. Both can be passed. By acting on these areas, we'll help to provide affordable, quality health care for millions who do not have it now and be a down payment, frankly, to the American people who deserve comprehensive health care reform without higher taxes and without cutting into the quality of United States medicine, which is the best in the entire world. Get the Government further in, and it's going to go down. So we've got to protect the quality as well as making insurance available to all who need it.

And there are other pieces of legislation. I met yesterday with the leaders in the Senate and House. I think we can pass our energy proposal. We need to get a national energy strategy out and approved, and that can be done. There are some others we

might get done. But these that I've outlined here are priority. And I now want to talk to our Members about how we can achieve these ends and hear from them if there's other key objectives to get to that can be accomplished here.

Thank you all very much.

Family Leave Legislation

Q. Mr. President, Democrats are ready to pass a family leave bill. Will you veto it in its present form?

The President. Well, I've got to look at what comes down here, of course, as I always do. But I've expressed my reservations about some of the things that are pending. So let's wait and see what happens. We don't need mandates; we need family leave without loading up small business with a lot more mandates. The concept of family leave I've strongly endorsed. But getting the Government further into it and throwing small businesses over the edge I'm not sure is the way to do it. But let's see what they say.

Q. Do you think the Democrats are playing politics with this issue?

The President. Almost everything, yes. [Laughter] No, I do. I believe it. I think the American people believe it. And now I have my chance to take the case to the American people. I've tried to stimulate this economy and been rebuffed. And I think the American people will see that clearly. I don't think they see it yet. But they will when we get through. Of course there's a lot of politics in this.

Note: The President spoke at 8:35 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Remarks to the Community in Norristown, Pennsylvania

September 9, 1992

Thank you so much. Thank you, Dr. Holton. May I congratulate our superintendent for his leadership on America 2000 and on the job he's doing for the whole school system in this area. Good morning to everybody. It's great to be back in Pennsylvania on this first day of school. Any excuse to

get out of class, I know, and here you all are. Thanks for greeting me. May I salute the man you heard from a minute ago, Secretary Alexander, Lamar Alexander. He's come to Washington after great experience in education and in government, and leading us all with this marvelous America 2000

program. We owe him a great vote of thanks, and I'm very pleased to have him with us.

Another old friend is with us today, the Congressman from this district, Larry Coughlin, who is leaving the Congress after marvelous service. But he came in with us. Larry, do you want to stand up there?

May I thank all involved with this visit, particularly Principal Barry Spencer, who has done a great job on all the arrangements and in making these facilities available. Josh Lippy, the president of the student council, I salute him as a student leader. I should add, welcome back to school. I hope you all had a great summer. And out here in the audience are not just students but members of the chamber of commerce, Payson Burt and others that are taking a leadership role. The class of 2000, I salute them, all of you, these participants who got up and read those education goals. I thought they did a first-class job; not a nervous one in the bunch. And I salute all the volunteers, the volunteers that make it happen as we try to reform education. I'll get to the teachers in a minute.

I'm told that many of you were nervous this week, tensions rising about the big event, wondering how you'll handle all the attention. Well, I'm here to put your fears at rest. I know you'll do great against North Penn Friday night.

You know, I want to just give a serious talk this morning. You know, our world has been through a lot of change in the past few years. When my kids were the age of the kids in this room today, they used to practice nuclear disaster drills. The alarms would go off, and they would all crawl under the desks and wait. This happened all across the country, all across many countries. That doesn't happen anymore. As a parent and as a grandparent, I am glad that American kids can grow up in the sunshine of peace. We ought to be grateful for that as a nation.

But now that the cold war is over, the challenge before our Nation is to win the peace, to guarantee that America in the 21st century will be not just a military superpower but also an export superpower, an economic superpower. That's just a fancy way of saying that when you grow up, you

deserve the chance to have a good job and live a better life than your parents and grandparents. You should live the American dream.

That's why I'm here this morning, to talk about how we can build what you need and deserve, the very best schools in the entire world.

Now, I admit, education is not usually found on the front page of the newspaper or at the top of the evening news, but it is the solution for most of what you do see there. As a President and as a grandparent, my loyalty lies with young people, kids like these fifth graders who did such a fantastic job laying out these national education goals this morning. In the year 2000, these fifth graders will graduate from high school. They will have changed so much, we will barely be able to recognize them. I want the schools from which they graduate to have changed so much, that we won't be able to recognize them either.

Four years ago, I said I wanted to lead a revolution in American education. And today, I come before you to report: The revolution is underway.

As President, my job is to set the agenda and mobilize the Nation. I'm proud that the goals the students read this morning are the very first education goals in our Nation's history. They were created by all the Governors, Republicans and Democrats alike, and are being embraced by parents, by teachers, by business and community leaders in town after town, city after city, all across America. Politics is being laid aside. A revolution in education is taking place. If he were here today, I'd shake his hand and salute the Governor of this State, who is holding out his hand to all who want to see America 2000 succeed. He's been a real leader, and we are grateful to him for that, Governor Casey.

I have come to Norristown because you accepted my challenge to reinvent American schools. And again, I salute the principal and the superintendent. Norristown is in the lead, but you're not alone. Today, 1,700 communities in every single State have adopted the vision of what we call America 2000. Seventeen hundred communities have drawn lines in the sand of the

future that read, our children must be number one.

The Federal Government should do more than offer congratulations, and we are matching our words with action as we promised.

You've heard about our first goal, making sure every student arrives at school ready to learn. For the first time, every eligible 4-year-old who wants a Head Start on kindergarten can get one. We have asked for record increases in investment for math and science education, to help train teachers. That is consistent with goal number four that was read here, math and science excellence. And I bet you were proud to watch the Olympics and see Jordan and Ewing and Malone slam-dunk the opposition. By the year 2000, I want you, our young people, to be able to slam-dunk the rest of the world in math and science. And we can do it.

Goal number five is to guarantee a skilled, literate work force. My opponent accuses me of cutting education spending. That's just flat wrong. I have proposed record increases in education funding, and during my 4 years, Federal investments in education have increased at a more rapid rate than State and local funding.

But if you think that money alone will reinvent our schools, think again. As a nation, only Switzerland, only Switzerland spends more per student on elementary and secondary education. This doesn't mean we should not make new investments; it means we cannot spend our money on the old way of doing things.

Our schools were basically designed for another age, 100 years ago: a world of Model T cars, in which toasters and flashlights were a big deal; a world in which most clothes were made at home. Imagine, a world without the King of Prussia Mall! [Laughter] Hard to believe.

But today, if you apply for a summer job in a car factory, they'll ask you if you can handle mathematics, estimation, and spatial relations, things your mom and dad just didn't have to know. And other things have changed. It's tougher being a parent, tougher being a teacher, and my grandkids tell me it's pretty tough being a kid these days. The world has changed, and so must

our schools.

You don't have to look far for new ideas. Teachers, school board members, parents, business leaders, all are fountains of innovation. They represent the true genius of America, and we must encourage them. Right now, as we gather today, America is responding to this charge. Really, four revolutions are underway.

First, we are in the process of creating hundreds of what we call break-the-mold schools, schools that reject the status quo; for example, a school where students attend all year round. Now, I challenged America to come up with ideas for these schools, and Norristown was one of 700 communities that responded. I applaud you for your energy. I applaud you for your creativity.

Revolution number two has to do with what we teach in our schools. We must demand more of you, so that you can compete in the world economy. Your math teachers are already relying on new, world-class standards, and you are learning more than your older brothers and sisters. By the time today's fifth graders enter high school, we will have new standards in science, history, English, geography, civics, and the arts. And to support these standards, we will have a national examination system, and I call it the American achievement tests, so that parents can know how our kids and our schools are doing.

The third revolution involves a very important person, your teacher. If I can ask a favor, since this is the first day of school, I assume none of you have received any tests back yet. So let's take advantage of the good feeling and say thanks to all the teachers in this room. They are making a difference in your life, and we should applaud them. I'd like to ask them to stand up, all the teachers here. [Applause] Thank you all very much.

Let me make this point to the students: When your teachers chose their career, they did it because they love learning and they love helping you to live up to your potential. They certainly didn't do it for self-gain. They did it to help someone else.

Not long ago, as part of my America 2000 effort, I met with some teachers up in Lehigh Valley, and I asked them what was

their biggest problem. I thought they might talk about a lack of money or discipline or the drug problem. But they instead talked about all the paperwork and regulations, about getting State government off their back.

I cannot do much about Harrisburg, but this week Congress will consider my legislation to give teachers more flexibility in using Federal funds, as long as they achieve results. Congress wants to give flexibility to just 300 schools. I want to give it to all 110,000 schools. We've got to relieve these teachers of federally mandated paperwork requirements. I trust the teachers, not the Government, to do what's right for our students.

There's one final revolution underway. I think every parent should have the right to choose the school they want for their children.

Not long ago, I was talking with a Milwaukee parent—she and her kid came to the Roosevelt Room right outside of the Oval Office in the White House—her name, Jannette Williams. She told me her son Javon went to a crowded school; teachers couldn't pay attention to him. He was so bored, he'd just go home halfway through the day. Then Milwaukee gave some parents the right to choose new schools for their kids. And today, this kid Javon is doing his homework, attending all his classes, even helping clean up around the classroom.

I want to hear more stories like that. My "GI bill" for kids would give thousand-dollar scholarships to children of middle- and low-income families that they can use to spend on any school of their choice. Most parents would choose public schools, but every parent should be able to choose any school, public, private, or religious. Right here in Norristown, almost 6,000 kids, about two-thirds of the school population, would be eligible for this thousand-dollar scholarship. Norristown would receive another \$6 million in new Federal funds, not controlled by bureaucrats but parents and teachers. When it comes to choosing schools, I trust parents, not the Government, to do the right thing.

So these are the four revolutions in American education: break-the-mold schools, new standards, getting Government off the

teachers' backs, and giving parents real choice. Together these revolutions will change our schools. When these fifth graders come back to visit Miss Ritter and Mrs. Bieler in 8 years from now, they will marvel at how small the desks are and how they have to stoop way over to use the water fountain. But as they look and listen to the school around them, they will say, "Everything else has changed."

Now, as some of you may have heard, there's an election in about 55 days. So before I leave you this morning, I want to take just a moment and contrast my education vision with the opponent's. I want to be fair. When I convened the national education summit—I mentioned it earlier in this speech about—with the Governors present, most of the Governors attended. Governor Clinton's role was constructive. He helped to set these national education goals, and I commend him for that.

However, the facts tell the story about his own record. In 1980, Arkansas ranked 47th in the percentage of adults with high school diplomas, now 48th. Today, they're dead last in the percentage of adults with college degrees.

But that's not the real issue. The real issue is what kind of education President would my opponent be. And in this campaign, Governor Clinton has spent a lot of time courting the education establishment, teachers unions' leaders and the liberal Congress. These people fear change. Look at the education before Congress today. They really don't want to spend more money on education. They want to spend it on the same old system. I wish fixing our schools was that easy; it is not.

A President's job is to set a path and insist that the Nation sticks to it. But Governor Clinton is in with the crowd who say no to break-the-mold schools, no to higher standards, no to less regulation, and no to my "GI bill" for kids. Here's the difference between me and my opponent: He has told the education establishment what they want to hear. And I will continue to tell them what America needs to hear.

You hear a lot of talk about change in this election. But ultimately, change isn't what you say; it is what you do. With your help

and the help of millions of other Americans, we have set the forces in motion to literally revolutionize the way we prepare our young people. And I hope you will give me the opportunity to finish that revolution.

To the parents, teachers, community leaders, and students participating in Norristown 2000, I say thank you. You are writing a better chapter in the history of America's next generation.

Thanks for listening. And may God bless

each and every one of you, the State of Pennsylvania, and the United States of America. Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at noon at Norristown High School. In his remarks, he referred to James N. Holton, superintendent, Norristown Area School District; Barry Spencer, principal, Norristown High School; and Payson Burt, president, Central Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With Employees of Uniform Tubes in Collegeville, Pennsylvania

September 9, 1992

The President. Listen, it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you all very much. Welcome to the Phil Donahue Show. [*Laughter*] I feel like that, sitting out here. But let me just thank Bruce, all that greeted us, all of you involved in this wonderful company, and all who, particularly, have participated in this education approach. As I look at the country and look at the problems facing us, we're in a transition period. We've been through economic hell in this country. We're poised in my view for a decent and strong recovery, but always at the bottom of this is education for the future.

One of the reasons we are so strongly in support of America 2000 is it trains people for the future. They have this thing: No one is too old to learn. Well, so to demonstrate that, Lamar Alexander, our Secretary of Education who is with me, suggested about a year ago that I learn to run a computer. I'm trying to kill him for that, but nevertheless I use it all the time. I think it does help demonstrate that nobody's too darn old to learn.

Similarly, we're in a mobile economy, and our whole health care reform proposal talks about people being able to move, take their health care with them if they move into another challenging area.

So I just wanted to salute you. I'm pleased to be at this company that's taken the lead in education. It offers everything for the future. We're got to do new ways. We can't

go back to the same old ways that the schools have been run forever. And I'm going to keep pushing for the America 2000 education program, meeting these six educational goals. They're not Democrat or Republican. The Governor of this State has been terribly supportive of this program, and it's one that I don't have to go to Congress for a lot of it. I've got to go to Congress for some of it, but a lot can be done right at the company level or the school level.

So I'm glad to be here for that reason and many others. And I see this guy's T-shirt: "I'll do it tomorrow. I'd rather be fishing." He's right. He's on to something. [*Laughter*] But for 55 days they won't let me do anything like that. No more fishing. I've got to get to work here. And I'm looking forward to the next few days to take this kind of message to the country.

Now, I don't know how we proceed, but fire away on questions. Shoot.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. What assurances can you give the American people that you'll be more effective working with Congress in your next term?

The President. Good question. I have been criticizing Congress as the gridlocked Congress. People on the other side are talking about change. The one institution that hasn't changed in 38 years is this Congress