

Sept. 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

leader of the entire world. Soviet communism is dead. Peace is on the move all around the world. And Governor Clinton says we're a nation in decline. He ought to get outside of Little Rock and travel and find out that we are the most respected nation on the face of the Earth. I want to keep it that way by keeping us strong, keeping us determined, keeping us economically viable at home.

You have a great, proud State, and I'm proud to be back in it. May God bless the people of Mississippi and the people of the United States of America. Thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 5:19 p.m. at Greenville Municipal Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Clarke Reed, State chairman, Bush-Quayle '92.

Remarks to the Community in Memphis, Tennessee

September 22, 1992

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. What a wonderful welcome.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all very much. May I salute at first Congressman Sundquist. You're lucky; you've got a great Member of the United States Congress. Barbara Bush, off on some other part of the campaign trail, sends her love to Martha Sundquist, the great wife of Don. May I say how pleased I am to have been introduced by one of the truly great members of the Cabinet, a man who served this country with such distinction, a national leader for education, Governor Lamar Alexander. What a class act.

May I thank and salute Dr. House, the superintendent of the schools here in Memphis; Dr. Langsdon, the Shelby County GOP and B-Q, the Bush-Quayle chairman in '92. And may I single out Dr. Walters—[*applause*—I didn't know kids clapped that much for a principal, but you're right. She is outstanding. And also Jakene Ashford, who greeted me earlier, the student body president. You've got a class-act president of this school, too.

You know, I left the White House at 6:40 this morning. We started out on the campaign trail in Springfield, Missouri. This is the sixth State we've visited in just a little over 12 hours. But you know, I can't think of a better place to finish this day than Memphis, Tennessee, home of the blues, home of the wet and dry ribs, the Old

South, and the new pyramid. And of course, the home of Elvis himself. Rest assured, I'm talking about Elvis Presley, not Elvis Clinton.

You know, for the past few weeks I've been all across America stumping for the economic ideas I believe in. We call it the Agenda for American Renewal. I want to open new markets for American products, create jobs for American workers because—don't listen to the other side—Americans never retreat. We always compete, and we always win. That is the American spirit.

If you listen to that Clinton-Gore ticket, you think everything is wrong. This morning new figures came out. Housing starts are up, the largest increase in a year and a half. Inflation is under control. Interest rates remain low. And I believe the stage is set, after a long, begrudging anemic growth, set for an economic recovery if we make the right choices in November. I need 4 more years to finish the job.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. That's what we want.

You know, the choice before the American people is really clear. Governor Clinton has already started with his program. He wants more Government and higher taxes. That is bad for America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe in something completely different, and so does Don. I believe that Government is too big and spends too much of your money, and I want

to cut taxes and provide incentives to get this economy moving again. You know, small business will be the horse pulling the wagon on our recovering economy. And so I want to give small businesses relief from taxation and regulation and litigation.

You know parents don't coach Little League for fear; doctors don't deliver babies for fear. Today Americans spend up to \$200 billion a year on lawyers and lawsuits. And I think it's crazy. As a nation we've got to sue each other less and care for each other more.

I have one wish above all others, though, and as I look out at the young faces in this audience, I think of the potential of our great country and of the challenge of our schools. Your great Governor, Lamar, puts our challenge in education this way: When the fifth graders graduate from high school, they will have changed so much we will barely recognize them. But for our young people to succeed, our schools will have to change so much that we barely recognize them either.

That's why I am so excited about America 2000 movement, the program to literally revolutionize education in this country. I am excited about our new American schools, about our higher standard for students, about freeing teachers from Government bureaucracy, and about giving every parent the choice to choose the best school for their child to learn in.

So one of the reasons I came here to this wonderful institution is to say thanks to Memphis, because you are the big part, a major part of America 2000. You are a leader in a revolution that is changing America from the schoolyard right on up. And so to the parents and the teachers and the business leaders and the community activists, I say thanks for caring about the kids, thanks for being loyal to Memphis' future.

Of course, there's another reason I came here today. As one or two of you may have heard, there's an election coming up in November. I have been traveling all across America making my case for our renewal agenda. While I've been outlining my positive ideas for the future, Bill Clinton has chosen to focus his energy on the past. And literally, you go back now, a lot of you are

students about government and politics, month after month, for the last 11 months, Governor Clinton has persisted in attacking me, distorting my record. This week he unveiled the campaign's first negative commercial. He's been saying, "Oh, wait until the Republicans go negative." It is the Clinton-Gore ticket that has aired the first national negative ads.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now I have a confession to make. I haven't talked much about his record because I think the American people would rather hear a positive discussion about what we'll do to renew America. But I will also admit that I'm a little tired of having my own record distorted, and I think it's time we don't just listen to what he says, but take a look at what Governor Clinton does.

That is what I've been doing today. That's exactly what I've been doing today, from Missouri to Oklahoma to Texas to Louisiana to Mississippi, and now in the great State of Tennessee, pointing out the facts, no exaggeration about Governor Clinton's record on economic fairness, on civil rights or lack thereof, on the environment, on health care. Over and over you see the same pattern emerging: Governor Clinton promises the Moon to America while the sky is falling in on Arkansas.

Regrettably for the young people in that State, the wonderful young kids across the way in Arkansas, education is no different. In his new book, candidate Clinton says America has failed to provide its children with either the best education or adequate protection from violence. And I disagree. I am proud of what we've done to promote America 2000. And I am especially proud of the leadership of that great son of Tennessee, Lamar Alexander.

And yes, sure, Governor Clinton, candidate Clinton, is critical of our record. But what has Governor Clinton done? Here are the facts. Let me give it to you. You're not going to like it, on behalf of your friends in Arkansas, but here's the record. Here are the facts, pure and simple. During the 1980's, Arkansas fell from 47th to 48th place in percentage of adults with a high school diploma. Arkansas' rankings on its

primary college entrance exam, the ACT, have declined. Twenty-eight States use the ACT as their primary college entrance test. The New York Times reported that in 1979, Arkansas ranked 20th out of those 28. In its latest ranking, it's down to 25th out of 28. While we're going up in the Nation, he's going down in the State of Arkansas.

Audience members: Boo-o-o!

The President. It is not fair to the young people there. It is not fair to the young families across the way. We know that more than three-quarters of Arkansas high school graduates require remedial instruction when they get to college. Think about that. Three out of four Arkansas college students spend their first year of college relearning what they missed in high school. That is not fair to the families of Arkansas. When it comes to the percentage of adults with a college degree, Governor Clinton's Arkansas still ranks 50th, 50th in the entire Nation.

Now, these are facts, pure and simple. And you can see there's a Grand Canyon by what candidate Clinton says about improving education and what Governor Clinton has actually done.

If you believe as I do, if you believe education is important, I ask you to look beyond the rhetoric. Look at the record. I have fought for higher standards. I have fought for less regulation. I have fought to reinvent our schools. I have fought for parental choice. These ideas are not popular in all places. But if you care about education, I think you must look at the two candidates and ask yourself a simple question: When it comes to reforming our schools, which candidate will tell America what it wants to hear and which will tell America what it needs to hear?

Enough talk of politics for the day. It's been a long, long day. It's been a wonderful day. And as you can imagine, campaigns can be grueling. Once in a while I'll get home, you know, after midnight, after being attacked in the press and the craziest mood I've every seen out there. And Barbara will ask me this simple question, "You know, we've got a good life; we've got a wonderful family. Why do you put up with it?" And I'll tell you why I put up with it, why I want 4 more years: I want it for the chil-

dren, for the bright-faced kids I see on their parents' shoulders at rallies all across the Nation, for the young people right here tonight.

Don Sundquist tells me that there are six young people from Russia with us this evening. They're part of an exchange program. Think about it. Think about how 10 years ago such a program might never be possible. Think about how 5 years ago these very kids sat halfway around the world knowing nothing of our world but fearing, as our own families, our own kids did, that the world they knew might be destroyed in a moment with the mere press of a finger on a button. Well, that terrible, awful nightmare has receded from our children's minds. And today these Russian kids can join with Memphis kids, and they can read stories together and play basketball and laugh at the same jokes and share the same sweet memories and think of all that has happened to make this possible.

In another time, in another age, Thomas Paine wrote these simple words, "We have the power to begin the world again." Well, we have begun our world again. Our new world is a world of hope. It's a world of promise, a world of peace, a world of unprecedented opportunity. I want our children to realize the magic of this new world, to believe in miracles, just as we can look at our Russian friends here tonight and say, "Miracles have finally come true."

If we can renew the world, and I take great pride in the fact that our administration has literally changed the world, made peace a reality and not a dream, made democracy on the march, made tranquility around the world something real and something we can touch and feel. If we can change the world, then I have no doubt that we can renew America, and we can strengthen our economy. We can reinvent our schools.

There is much work to be done, and I believe I am the leader to do it. That is why I am running for reelection, and that is why I ask for your support. And don't ever let the Governor from across the way convince you that we are a nation in decline. We are the most respected, freest, greatest nation on the face of the Earth, and I want to lead

you for 4 more years.

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

Note: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. at Craigmont High School.

Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1992

September 22, 1992

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S. 5, the "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1992." This bill would mandate that public and private employers with 50 or more employees provide their employees with leave under certain circumstances.

I want to strongly reiterate that I have always supported employer policies to give time off for a child's birth or adoption or for family illness and believe it is important that employers offer these benefits. I object, however, to the Federal Government mandating leave policies for America's employers and work force. S. 5 would do just that.

America faces its stiffest economic competition in history. If our Nation is to succeed in an increasingly complex and competitive global marketplace, we must have the flexibility in our workplaces to meet this challenge. We must ensure that Federal policies do not stifle the creation of new jobs or result in the elimination of existing jobs. The Administration is committed to policies that create and preserve jobs throughout the economy—serving the most fundamental need of working families.

My Administration is also strongly committed to policies that foster a complementary relationship between work and family and encourage the development of a strong employer-employee partnership. If these policies are to meet the diverse needs of our Nation, they must be carefully, flexibly, and sensitively crafted at the workplace by employers and employees, and not in Washington, D.C., through Government mandates imposed by legislation such as S. 5.

Therefore, I have transmitted to the Congress legislation to establish an alternative flexible family leave plan that will encourage

small and medium-sized businesses to provide family leave for their employees.

My flexible family leave plan is based on a refundable tax credit for businesses that establish nondiscriminatory family leave policies for all their employees. A refundable tax credit of 20 percent of compensation (for a credit of up to \$100 a week—to a maximum total credit of \$1,200) would be available for all businesses with fewer than 500 employees, for a period of family leave up to 12 weeks in length. Family leave would include the birth or adoption of a child or the care of a seriously ill child, parent, or spouse. It also would cover a serious health condition that prevents the employee from performing his or her job. This approach will cover almost all workplaces—smaller companies that S. 5 does not cover that are less likely to provide leave to their employees. My plan covers about 15 million more workers than would be eligible under S. 5 and 20 times the number of workplaces. Those not affected by my plan work for large businesses, which generally have established family leave policies.

I want to emphasize again that my bill will help where the concern is most acute—with small and medium-sized businesses and the workers in those businesses. S. 5 misses these key workplaces by excluding businesses with fewer than 50 employees. We know that these hard-pressed small companies usually offer fewer benefits than large firms, that they generate most of our new jobs—in fact, they provide the majority of people with their first job—and that they are more likely to employ women and re-entrants to the labor force. Under my proposal, many more of the millions of men and women employed by smaller businesses