

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

The President. Here's why, here's how it's going to work. Here's how it's going to work and why all these critics and all these naysayers and all these people telling you that we have no chance are going to be wrong. It's going to boil down to this: First place, I believe that we're not a country in decline. I'm absolutely convinced that we are a rising nation, not a declining nation. Secondly, I know it's been tough out there for families and for kids, but we're moving. And I can say as the President of the United States I take great pride in the fact that these young kids here go to bed at night without the same fear of nuclear war as their mothers and dad did. And that is a significant accomplishment. The world is more peaceful, and the world has changed.

People say to me, "Listen, with Barbara at your side and your 5 kids and your 12

grandkids, you've got it made. Why do you want to do this?" Well, let me tell you, I finish what I start. I want to see us lift up these young people here today and make them understand that if we do what I've told you today I want to do, their lives are going to be better than the lives of their parents. And we are going to lead the entire world into economic recovery, and that means jobs for every American that wants to work.

And so I'm not done yet. I ask you to go to the polls on Tuesday. I ask for your support on the basis of character and trust. And I will do my level-best to lead this country to new heights and new prosperity.

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

Note: The President spoke at 4:32 p.m. at Nationwide Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Bob Taft, Ohio secretary of state.

Question-and-Answer Session in Columbus

October 28, 1992

Moderator. Mr. President, I would like to ask the first question tonight. And first of all, let me just say thanks for joining us. It's a pleasure to have you in Columbus, and welcome to our fine State.

The President. Nice to be back.

Fall of Communism

Moderator. I want to start with a campaign flap that surfaced today, as far as I know. Your opponent, one of your opponents, Bill Clinton, has waved a copy of New Yorker magazine, which claims that you said to former Soviet Premier Gorbachev, "Don't worry about what I might say during the campaign about the fall of communism in the Soviet Union; don't worry about that. I'll explain it to you later." What exactly did you say to Mr. Gorbachev?

The President. I said a lot of things to Mr. Gorbachev—I don't recall exactly that—because I did worry about the fall of communism, and I'm delighted that it happened on our watch. I give great credit

to my predecessor, because you've got to go back 12 years. A lot of what it was about then was peace through strength versus the nuclear freeze movement. And some people were so frantic about nuclear war they felt the only way you'll get peace is if you have a nuclear freeze.

We didn't believe that. We stayed strong. We tried to work with the Russians. Communism is—international communism or outreach communism—imperial communism is dead, and I'm very proud that it happened when I've been President. But I don't know what they're talking about. I've had many conversations with Mr. Gorbachev. I still salute him. I am very proud that Mr. Yeltsin has said, "It was George Bush who first stood up for me,"—when he was on that tank—"first world leader, and he never wavered, and that meant more to the failure of the coup and the success of Russia going truly democratic than anything else."

So I don't know. I have great respect for Mikhail Gorbachev and for Yeltsin, but I've learned to have a little question mark about the *New Yorker* these days. I don't want to start by—in front of all these great press, you know, broadcast people, but I've learned something: You can't believe everything you read. And so, I don't know what he's talking about, but I am very proud of our record and how we handled Eastern Europe. A lot of Americans, a lot of Polish Americans, Hungarian Americans, Baltic State Americans, go to bed at night without worrying about their families the way they used to, saying, thank God this administration stood up for democracy and freedom.

Auto Fuel Economy

Moderator. Mr. Bush, yesterday in Dayton and again in Toledo you were warning that Bill Clinton favors increasing fuel economy levels to 40 miles a gallon, and you were warning that that could cost every Ohio auto worker his job. We've talked with United Auto Workers union in Detroit today; they don't seem to share that same concern or fear of Mr. Clinton, Governor Clinton, and they say that to their knowledge there is no one in the industry who is calling for 40 miles a gallon. How do you get people concerned about that issue when the auto workers themselves don't appear to be that concerned?

The President. Well, I think they should be concerned. You've got to remember the auto unions have endorsed Bill Clinton, for a lot of reasons. But I am convinced that 40- to 45-miles-per-gallon CAFE, fuel efficiency standards, would throw—I hope I didn't say all the auto workers; maybe in a hyperbole or an exaggeration for a campaign I did—but they'll throw a lot of workers out of work, because they cannot meet those standards.

And it is another example, in my view, of where—it's in Gore's book, I believe—where they adopt one position in going to one area, the environmental community, then mute it down. Governor Clinton met with the leaders of the three major auto businesses with the head of the UAW at his side, and said, "Well, I'm studying it; I'm going through the National Academy of Sciences report"—about this thick, all

square roots and stuff. He couldn't possibly have done that. And I just believe that—I am certain that I'm correct that trying to meet those standards would throw a lot of people out of work. Not going to back away from it one single bit.

Government Gridlock

Moderator. Mr. President, your popularity after the Gulf war was at a record high. Why did you not use that clout, that influence to push through aggressively your domestic agenda?

The President. Have you ever tried to work with this nutty Congress? I did try. I'll tell you the difference. When we went to war in Desert Storm, I didn't need to get Mr. Gephardt or Mr. Mitchell to go along. I made decisions. We moved troops. I took a lot of flak from the press and from the Congress, and we shaped public opinion, we put together an international coalition; still didn't need anything out of Congress. Then I said to them this: I said, "I would like you to pass a resolution endorsing the United Nations resolution. I don't need that to commit American forces; there are plenty of precedents in it." They did pass it. That's the one I'm accusing Governor Clinton of waffling on, where he said, "I agreed with the minority, but I guess I would have voted with the majority." We got the vote, and we went ahead.

That is quite different than working with the Congress, this Congress, not the new one but this one, in terms of domestic initiatives. And I think they made a calculation after the war that they were not going to cooperate with the President. The reason I'm convinced we can break the gridlock in the future is because they screwed up a little tiny bank and a lousy little post office on Capitol Hill. We're going to have a lot of new Congressmen, Democrats and Republicans.

And the best time for a President elected to his second term is to go in there and say now, no politics. Don't have to worry about it. No more elections, no more debates. Just do the people's business. A whole bunch of new Congressmen, some Democrat, some Republican. We can get it done.

But I'm telling you, I tried very hard to

get the Congress to move on things that would have helped the economy: investment tax allowance, enterprise zones, capital gains reduction, on and on. And they just dug in and didn't want to do it. Now, maybe I could have been more effective, because I am unhappy with the result. But I'm very pleased that this economy seems to be growing in spite of their—their best chance for me not to win is to have things lousy for the American people. And I'm afraid that's an awfully negative attitude.

So it was a difference. You see, in one area you can just do things. In the other, you have to get the Congress to go along. We saw what it was like when a Democratic President was there and a Democratic Congress. Interest rates were out through the ozone layer at 21 percent, and inflation was 15. And the "misery index," invented by the Democrats—inflation and unemployment—was over 20. I don't want to go back to that. But I do think there's hope here in the new one, because they're going to be listening, the new Members, Democrat and Republican, to the same people I'm listening to. And when I win, it will be because my economic plan, my health care plan, my education plan. So I think it will change.

And the other thing is, on her question, we got a lot done for the American people before politics set in, before the war: the Americans for Disability Act, brandnew child care legislation. Even afterward, we got a highway bill that's going to spend \$150 billion. So I'm making the distinction between domestic affairs and national security matters.

Moderator. Mr. President, the voters out here have dozens of questions, so we want to get right to them.

The President. Okay, if I get going too long—I get wound up on the answers. So please, you, whoever's the master of ceremonies say, "Please keep it short, sir," because I know I don't want to abuse the process here.

Infrastructure Funding

Q. This relates to the economy, but why has the administration allowed a buildup in the Highway Trust Fund rather than spending down this fund to build and improve highways and spur on the economy?

The same thing is true of the Air Trust Fund.

The President. We've just passed a—well, some of it has budgetary implications—but we've just passed, you know, a few months ago, a \$150 billion transportation bill. It's good, and it's going to get the highways building and the infrastructure built. But I disagree with my opponent that what we ought to do is add to that. I think we ought to get money out, but I think the answer to your question is budgetary.

Urban Initiatives

Q. Mr. President, given the riots in Los Angeles and the continued decay in our urban centers, if elected, what can urban residents expect from you in the way of plans and actions over the next 2 or 3 years of your administration?

The President. I think they can expect a revitalization of the cities, because here's what's going to happen: After South Central—and I went out there and I invited Mayor Bradley, Governor Wilson of California, and Peter Ueberroth, who's working the private sector side, trying to bring businesses into the urban areas, to come back to Washington. We met with the Democratic leadership that I was just assailing here and sat down with them: the Speaker, the leaders in both Houses, Republican and Democrat. And the Mayor and those others said the one thing we need for the cities, or the one thing we all agree on is we need urban enterprise zones. Ueberroth, the other day, decried the fact that we haven't gotten them.

I believe that people want that now. I believe that the Congress, in the new Congress, will move on urban enterprise zones. We've got a good program that is already working, that has bipartisan support, just getting started, called "Weed and Seed": weed out the criminal elements and try to hit this drug thing head-on, and seed the neighborhood with hope. I believe our homeownership and tenant management approach is going to prevail in the next Congress, and the enterprise zones.

And the other point I'll make on the mayors is, they came, the National League of City mayors came—separate meeting—and they said to me, the main cause of

urban decay or decline is the decline in the American family. That was Tom Bradley of Los Angeles, it was a Republican Mayor out of Plano, Texas, and all across the spectrum. It wasn't liberals, it wasn't conservatives; it wasn't Democrats, it wasn't Republicans. He was talking about finding ways to strengthen the American family. I insist that we have to find ways. And mine are support for law enforcement, choice in child care and schools and whatever it is.

But I think the agenda that I've just outlined here has a very good chance of getting through the next Congress. Some of it is coming my way in legislation that I won't sign because it's hooked into major tax increases. But I think a new Congress is going to want to do exactly what you're saying: Let's help these cities. And I think they're going to want to help them along the philosophical lines I've outlined here.

Economic Issues

Q. Mr. President, throughout the election, it has been said that you are not in touch with the average American. Tonight I'm considering casting a vote for Mr. Clinton for that and several other reasons. How can you convince me tonight that you do understand the concerns of the average American?

The President. Well, that's a pretty hard sell if you're thinking of voting for Clinton, because I would think you'd look at the whole record, including the Arkansas record. I think you would look at the rhetoric, if you're an accountant. We'd been told that this country—by the Democrats—that we're in a big recession. We have had growth for the last six quarters. And I have been saying we're not in a recession. And people like Governor Clinton are saying I am out of touch, aided and abetted by a lot of, you know, talking heads on the television, some Republicans and some Democrats. I believe I am in touch. I believe I understand what's needed. And I think the philosophy of Government that I have would better help the average working man.

Let me give you an example: Governor Clinton talks about having Government invest, to use his—and he puts that to, exact quote, invest. It is not Government that creates any meaningful job and expands the

economy. Government takes your money, and you know this as an accountant, and goes about investing it. Well, it's not investment. It is spending. What we need to do is do what I've suggested to spur small business. As an accountant, try this one on: investment tax allowance, capital gains. It is not a tax break for the rich. It will stimulate, in my view, entrepreneurship. And I like the credit, \$5,000 credit for the first-time homebuyer, because I think it would stimulate the housing business and also all the businesses that go into it.

He wants to invest, take \$220 billion and let somebody back in Washington invest it, and I don't. I want to free up, through less spending and hopefully less taxation, the private sector.

And so we have a big difference on that. And I would say the fundamental philosophy is different. And if you think that we need more Government and more spending on that level, you may go with Governor Clinton, but I'd ask you to look at the Arkansas record. I'd ask you to look at the rhetoric that's been used against me up until yesterday when people saw that we are growing and that our economy is better than Japan and Germany and Europe, although we were told that we've got to do more like Japan and Germany. This is no time to move toward European nationalism or whatever you want to call it. They're moving toward us.

So I've got a big philosophical difference with him, and how you decide on these economic issues should consider that. I'm also asking people to look at the overall leadership: who do you trust if a crisis comes up, and is the world more peaceful, and all that kind of thing. So I hope I can win you over. Maybe not. I'll put you down as doubtful at this point. [*Laughter*]

Moderator. Mr. President, going back to his question, though, about being out of touch—

The President. Yes.

Moderator. —with the American people. You've been in office for 4 years. The campaign has really only been hot and heavy for the last year, even the last 6 months.

The President. Yes.

Moderator. How do you account then for this perception among so many people that you are out of touch?

The President. Propaganda by the enemy—opposition. They keep hammering that. They keep saying that. And it's not true. How do you account for the fact that many people in your business keep telling the country we're in a recession when we've grown for 6 straight months? That's six straight quarters now. I mean, that's not out of touch to say that. And I say it, and people say, "You're out of touch." When I say we've grown at 2.7 percent, that's pretty fair growth. I also add, a lot of people are hurting, and a lot of people are scared about their jobs, so here's what to do to help them.

But I think it is pure rhetoric on the part of the opposition, because I'm in touch all the time. My heavens, I wish you saw all the mail that comes in and the phone calls, and share the anxiety and the concern I feel. But when you hear that, that's part of the Democratic—now, the only way that guy can win is to convince America that we're in decline and that the economy is worse than it is. And I will win because I think I have better economic answers.

Moderator. Mr. President, this is a fifth grader, and she's going to be voting in a few years. But she's got a question I think a lot of parents would like an answer to. Betsy, go ahead.

Education

Q. What do you plan to do about—wait. What are you going to do to make it possible for all children to get a good education?

The President. Improve the existing educational system. This is pretty hard for you to realize. We've got all kinds of change in this country, and one thing that really hasn't changed fundamentally in years is elementary and secondary education. We have a program that you may or may not have heard of called America 2000. There are 1,700 communities already participating in this program. It bypasses the powerful teachers union and says to the local teachers and the parents and the community leaders, literally, help us reinvent the schools. So that's one thing that's going to happen. In

some areas, some urban areas, they say, we only want 8 hours. And others might say, we want year-round schools. Others are going to try more emphasis on math and science.

As President, I put into effect, with the help of the Governors, including Governor Clinton, six national education goals. It's never happened before. They're voluntary, but they set the future for education, kids like you. More emphasis on math and science is one of them. Another one is every kid must start ready to learn. That means Head Start, and we've literally doubled the funding for Head Start in this administration. It means nobody's too old to learn. That's one of them, more job retraining and more adult education and give people credits while they're working to get educated. And so we've got the plan. We've got the ideas to revolutionize education.

And there's one last point: I think parents ought to have the right to choose the schools. When I got out of the service they gave you a GI bill, and they didn't say you can only use this in public institutions. They said you can go wherever you want to college or use this money to help you get to college. I want to see the same thing tried in public education. Forty-six percent of the public school teachers in Chicago send their kids to private school. I want to try this now under our "GI bill" for kids that says to parents: You choose, public, private, or religious. And the schools not chosen will do what's happened in Milwaukee where they've tried it. They'll get better. It won't undermine the public school system; it will make it better.

Moderator. Mr. President, just a followup to Betsy's question. When you ran in 1988 against Mr. Dukakis, you said you wanted to be the education President. Four years later, if you had to grade George Bush's paper, what grade would you give yourself?

The President. I would modestly give myself an A, because of what I just told her. Because here's an area that I didn't have to go to the Congress for much of it. There was an education bill they passed. If it ever lands on my desk, I won't sign it. And why is that? Because all it does is put mandates on local school systems and State school sys-

tems. The same old tired thinking from an institution that also hasn't changed, that one for 38 years, Democrats controlling the Congress. All they want to do is send me education bills that dictate exactly what kind of program you have, some old geezer that's been there forever thinking he understands education. We've got education goals, and I've outlined here a brandnew and, I think, really good approach to education. So others may not give me the A, but I'll admit that that's what I think.

Women's Issues

Moderator. Mr. President, a longtime voter back here. Nellie Lent is 96 years of age, and she lives in a nursing home in Worthington. She wants you to know that she first voted for a President, President Harding, back in 1921. Nellie?

Q. This was the first year women were allowed to vote. It is now 1992, the year for women. Why should women vote for you?

The President. That's a good question. I don't know if you all heard it. The year of the woman, why should women vote for me? She remembers the first year that women voted. I believe that we've got good programs: Women, Infants and Children, for example. That's a program that Chalmers Wylie, sitting here, knows about. We have vastly increased funding for that program. It helps families.

I believe they ought to vote for me because I think a lot of women are in business. We are trying to say, don't let Governor Clinton's approach invest Government, grow Government. Get the small business going. Women in there are really starting lots of businesses. I think that's good.

Our Secretary of Labor is vigorously fighting against the "glass ceiling," which is kind of an artificial barrier to women. And we have tried to set the pace. I have three women in the Cabinet. No other President's ever done that. We've appointed women to be head of the National Institute of Health and head of Social Security, and meaningful jobs because they have shown tremendous competence. So I believe on all these reasons that I would be a good and, hopefully, effective President for women, upward mobility of women.

Moderator. Nellie, are you satisfied with the President's answer?

Q. Yes, I would like to shake the President's hand.

The President. We're going to do that after this. You may be—let's see, you're 90—I don't want to—we're in the historical society here. My dad was born here and grew up here. Maybe he might have taken you to the prom someplace. I'll have to come back and find out.

It's not that I'm nervous. I went running this morning. I'm still pounding the water. Now, go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Racial Harmony

Q. Good evening, Mr. President. I would like to commend you on the wonderful job you did on bringing nations together to address the Persian Gulf crisis and peace talks. I would like to know why you have not used that same energy and seriousness to confront the racial divisions which plague our Nation. This is a very serious matter to me. In reading the letters from the Birmingham jail from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he was facing some of the same crises in his time, and that was in 1962 and 1963. Here is 1992, and we still have cities going up in flames. I still have to look at a white Senate, and it's devastating to me. And I would just like to know your response.

The President. My response is, I have tried to be a President sensitive to the elimination of bigotry and of anti-Semitism. Under my Presidency we have passed two pieces of civil rights legislation. One of them is the Americans for Disabilities Act that is a very good piece of forward-looking civil rights legislation. The other one moves against discrimination in the workplace.

I think you're on to something because I don't believe it's a question of legislation now. It's a question of what you care about in your heart and how you feel. And I hope that my record, dating back to when I was a Member of the Congress from Texas, voting for open housing—that wasn't easy in those days. And I hope it shows a commitment to racial fairplay.

I have spoken out about it over and over again from the White House. But I'm sorry you feel this way, because I really believe I understand. I guess I can't say I really un-

derstand totally what it is like to be a person who is discriminated against, but I do understand the hurt. I have worked for—this is maybe just one way of sensitizing one's soul—for the United Negro College Fund that my brother today heads. And I believe that we have to do better in education.

But on your point, I think I can accept some criticism on that. But believe me, I will continue to speak out against racism and anti-Semitism, move against it if further legislation is required. It is a blight on ourselves as a country. I don't want to represent to the country who might be listening tonight that I think things are getting worse in this department. I mean, yes, we had those South Central riots, and yes, we've got a lot of tension, but I don't think it's worse than the sixties and things like that. I hope we're improving. But whether we are or not, we've got to do better, and so I appreciate you expressing your concern. I hope I can demonstrate in a far better way in a second term my concern.

Urban Initiatives

Moderator. There's been a lot of talk in the news lately going back to L.A. and to the site of the riots, and a lot of talk about the fact that the rebuilding is not happening very fast. Are there things that you would do in your second administration that were not accomplished in the first?

The President. I think I've outlined to you some that I'm confident can get done with a new Congress. I believe that the whole approach I've outlined here on urban America is the answer to South Central. And please don't just take it from me, take it from Mayor Bradley. Take it from Governor Wilson and take it from Peter Ueberroth, all of whom are working very hard across party lines to make this happen.

I would suggest that people that feel as strongly as I do support me, trying to get those kinds of legislation through. I believe a new Congress will do it, because there's no more politics, at least for a couple of years. And so I think that that's the way we're going to get the job done for South Central and other areas.

I mentioned this "Weed and Seed" program. This is good, new policy in helping win the fight against drugs and still help

the kids. I also happen to think that what I said about family is true. The liberal elite hates it. But when I talk about family values and strengthening family, I can cite the visit from those mayors. And we've got too many teenage pregnancies. We've got too many kids nobody knows their name. We've got too many that don't have respect for their communities and the law enforcement officers and for their own families, their own mothers and dads. We've got to do better. And law enforcement is one way to do it. The kinds of programs I'm talking are a far more satisfactory way to get it done. But we are going to keep working until the problem is solved.

National Debt

Q. I was just wondering, I've been following the debates and everything, and you turned to the cameras during the debates and, you said, "In case of crisis who do you want in the White House?" And your foreign affairs are great, but we are in the middle of a major domestic crisis.

The President. How would you outline it, so I'm sure we're talking to the same thing?

Q. The debt, the \$4 trillion debt. Ross Perot says, "I want to get in there, and I want to get that hood up, and I want to work on this." Bill Clinton says, "I'm going to be the main guy in charge of domestic policy." Why are you pushing this off on James Baker? Why aren't you the guy in there with the hood up, fixing the engine, so to speak?

The President. Well, let me tell you what we're going to do. And I am the guy. Jim Baker did a superb job in foreign affairs. He did a superb job in domestic affairs. You may forget he was Secretary of the Treasury, and a very good one. He was the Chief of Staff of the White House, and a very good one. Here is an extraordinarily able person.

But make no mistake about it, nobody's handing off anything. I've learned something: You don't blame somebody if it goes wrong, you take the blame as President. Once in a while you get a little credit, that's fine, as President. But I'm the captain of that ship. I'm the President of the United

States, and I make the decisions.

Now, Jim Baker is extraordinarily able, and I can't think—you need help, and he's the best. He will bring together a new team to get these programs through the Congress where it's needed and help me in every single way.

But let me try some things on you—not just open the hood, fix it—I mean, you've got to do a little more than that. How about let me give you some ideas. Let me give you a couple of ideas. The biggest part of the budget—and somebody referred to it back here—two-thirds of the budget doesn't come to the President: Mandatory spending programs. Put the cap on them. And if I have my way with this Congress I keep getting asked about, they will take the tough decision. And I'll have to take political heat because it isn't easy. Let the mandatory programs grow to population and to inflation, and that's it. No more. They'll grow; they won't be cut. But that's what has to happen to get the deficit down.

Add to that a balanced budget amendment. That got within six votes or eight votes of passing. And what happened? If you think I'm down on Congress on other things, I'm down on them in this because they got something like 12 people that co-sponsored the resolution to change their votes. We're going to get it in the next Congress. We're going to get a line-item veto. Forty-three Governors have it. And my case to the American people is if they can't do it, let the President have a shot. It's not going to solve the whole problem.

I like term limits. Keep the Congress close to the people. I like the idea that I proposed of a check-off that says to the American taxpayer you can check off up to 10 percent of your income tax and that has to go to one thing, reducing the deficit. And if Congress doesn't bring the spending side down, then you have a sequester across the board. And I believe that kind of medicine is necessary. It is not simply saying, "I'm going to fix it," it is a specific proposal. I believe I'm going to win because people think those ideas are important to get into effect. So that's how I'd cope with the deficit, or try to.

Domestic Issues and Foreign Policy

Moderator. Mr. President, just briefly as a followup, by appointing Mr. Baker as domestic czar, can we interpret that to mean that in your second term you will pay more attention to domestic issues than foreign policy? How would you rank those?

The President. It depends what's happening in the world. A foremost responsibility of the President is the national security of this country. And when the history of my Presidency is written, 5 years from now I hope, I think we'll have every analyst, every—we'll have a library and everybody will go in there, and they'll see how my time was spent. My time, much more of it has been spent on domestic matters. The problem is, and we keep getting the same question, is I'm having to fight with a highly partisan Congress. That is going to change.

So I will do what I have to do as Commander in Chief, as the guarantor of peace. And yes, I take some credit that this little girl knows not the same fear of nuclear war that some of you middle-aged guys out there knew. You don't have any training drills. If we're going to take a hit on the economy being disconnected, how about a little credit for world peace and democracy and ancient enemies talking to each other, ancient enemies talking peace when nobody dreamed that was possible?

So I will do what I have to do to guarantee this little kid's future. But I am going to continue to strive, and I've thrown out some of the ideas, for changing things in a domestic way that helps families. And it's a big challenge, but I'm absolutely confident, with the changes that are going to take place in Congress—there's already 100 new Members, might be 150 coming in there—that we're going to get the job done.

Taxes

Q. Good evening, Mr. President. Mr. President, talking about family values and the economy, nowadays there are a lot of us women that are choosing to stay home to be with our children, to raise them and give them a firm foundation, and therefore providing a job opportunity for someone that's unemployed. There's a lot of tax breaks and

incentives for two-family incomes and for child care, but where's the tax break for the family where the mother chooses to stay in the house?

The President. I don't think—you sound like Barbara Bush. She says what happens in your house is more important than what happens in the White House, and she's absolutely right. And that doesn't mean that she looks down on my daughters-in-law who happen to work for a living, or whatever it is. But I think that you're on to something. But I don't want to, you know, promise things. There isn't enough money in the world, in the United States, when we're operating at a deficit, to subsidize people for doing that which historically many people chose to do, stay and look after their kids at home. So I don't want to mislead you, but I just don't think we can promise any such thing.

We do have flexibility in child care. It used to be, well, you have to look to the Government for the kind of child care you want. Now we work it out so parents can choose and they can get people in the neighborhood together or grandparents to look, whatever it is, and not have—and you still get support from the Government. But I don't want to misrepresent it. I don't believe, given the deficit that this gentleman understandably asked about as a young guy, his future being mortgaged every day, that we have enough money out there to subsidize those people like yourself who have sorted out your priorities to do what I admire. And I think that's fine that you're doing it. But I just can't pledge that we can give you money to do it.

Interest Rates

Moderator. Mr. President, families of all ages need help. And Nellie that we were just talking to, the elderly woman, so many of those people call us every day at the television station and they say that as the interest rates go down, their interest on savings is going down. And they're on fixed incomes. Can you hold out any hope for them?

The President. Well, I can't hold out for any hope for saying I want interest rates to go up. I mean, I am proud that they're down. And families that are overburdened

on interest are being able to refinance their homes. So I can't say to you they should do anything other than to invest their savings in something that yields more money. We have got to have a policy of keeping interest rates down. And that is, in the final analysis, going to be one of the major stimulants of jobs and opportunity, jobs for kids.

So to those whose earnings are down because they had their money in CD's who are now paying lower interest rates because we've been able to contain inflation, I would simply say, you know, try to find alternative investments because there's plenty that pay more than a CD did or a Government bond does. But I cannot represent myself as wanting to see some policy that would raise interest rates. I am very proud of the fact we brought them down. And I'm very proud of the fact we brought inflation down so that saver, that senior citizen you're talking about doesn't see his or her savings explode in the cruelest tax of all, inflation.

And I would get a partisan shot in here by reminding people what it was like when we had a Democratic President singing the same song that Governor Clinton is singing and a Democratic Congress. "Misery index," 20; inflation, 15; interest rates, 21. We can't go back.

Supreme Court Appointments

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to change the subject for a moment. I believe that many voters who are undecided or those who perhaps might even support your candidacy are quite concerned about the record that you have exhibited in appointments to the Supreme Court and concerned about who you might appoint to the Supreme Court in a second term. And I think perhaps that fear is enhanced or exacerbated a bit by your allowing Pat Buchanan to speak as he did at your convention. I'm wondering if you would speak a bit as to how you would approach likely appointments to the Supreme Court in a second Bush administration.

The President. I'll do that. And unlike the Democratic convention, we didn't censor what people said, and we didn't keep people that disagreed with that Clinton line

off the program. That's one thing that's different.

Secondly, maybe we just have a fundamental difference as to what should happen on the Supreme Court. I have put two people on the Supreme Court who are constructionists, not trying to legislate from the Bench. I am not in the least bit apologetic about Clarence Thomas, nor about David Souter, both extraordinarily well-qualified, both passed by a Democratic Senate. And I don't think the Supreme Court ought to legislate. What worries me is what Governor Clinton has indicated. Barbara sat near him at the Italian-American Foundation, and once again he raised this horrible specter of Mario Cuomo going on the Supreme Court. And you want to get somebody on there to legislate with a liberal point of view, then go that route.

My view is, I don't know where these guys stand on individual, specific social issues, but I have confidence in the fact that they are not going to legislate but they are going to interpret the Constitution. And that's what I look for, and no revisionism is going to make me change my mind about Clarence Thomas, none.

You know, the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas thing. They say, well, they've changed now. Forty-two percent of the people—we live and die by these polls—42 percent of the people used to think it was Thomas. Now he's a minority, and Anita Hill's a hero. Why? What made people change their mind on that? Is it that they suddenly all studied the issues? No, they got drummed into them by the women's movements and all these people that Anita Hill was a hero and Clarence Thomas is the bad guy. But when the American people saw the hearings, and they listened and passed judgment themselves, two to one they believe him.

And so I am proud of him. I'll stand by him. I do not want to appoint people to the Court that have a sick point of view that they want to impose through the Bench on the people. That's the job of the Legislature, and to some degree it's the job of the President. So that's my philosophy and that's why I've acted the way I have.

I looked at my watch during the debate, and I caught all kinds of hell from the media. But I'm going to look at it again,

openly here. It is a Timex, and it now is 16 of—thank you. That's exactly what I did in the debate and he—oh, look at—he doesn't know, he doesn't seem assured of himself. He's looking at the watch again. I mean, come on. I wanted to declare myself. This is the strangest political year I've ever seen. Now things are changing, fast.

Family Values

Moderator. Mr. President, I have a followup question. Thanks for looking at your watch so the rest of us could get away with not doing it. [*Laughter*] Mr. Sharp asked you about the role of Pat Buchanan in your convention. That goes to some criticism that you have gotten from people in your own party about so leaning to the religious right of the party that you have alienated a lot of centrist Republicans and Democrats, talking about even William Safire's column a couple of weeks ago that you've done damage not only, he says, to your own Presidency but also to the party in general.

The President. Couldn't disagree more. Can't be guided by New York Times columnists. I've decided to take them on. I used to sit quietly—hey, he's entitled to his opinion. I don't agree with him, and I don't agree about that. And as I indicated, Pat Buchanan ran against me. He flailed me out there in the primaries. You've got a short memory, those who are asking that question. How do you think I felt about that? That's the political process. He's entitled to his opinion, his emphasis. I'm entitled to mine. But if your question is, how do I feel about faith and family values and that, I've tried to tell you how I feel about it. And I'm not retreating from it, because it isn't anything to do about prejudice.

I got a question from Tom Brokaw one night on a nationally televised show not so long ago. And he said, with all respect to NBC, he said—and he did it in a very nice way, and it wasn't pejorative—but he said, “Are you suggesting when you talk about family values that your values, your and Barbara's family is better than Hillary and Bill Clinton's?” I said, “Of course not.” Of course not.

What we're talking about, though, is what

these mayors told me about. And I happen to believe that family is still the fabric of society. And when a little kid is born to a 13-year-old mother, some way we've got to find a way to have that kid loved by the parent and teach values and respect. And it isn't happening. So I am not going to move away from that, but I am not going to identify myself with the rhetoric of a man that went out and slammed the heck out of me up there in New Hampshire.

So it's a liberal's nightmare, but I call them as I see them. I'm kind of proud that our convention didn't try to censor what suddenly was the wrath of all the talk shows. But we'll see, we'll see how it comes out on election day.

Health Care

Q. I work for \$5.50 an hour. I go to work every day. My boss does not supply health care for us. We cannot afford to purchase health care. What is your plan, if any, to help us get insurance of some kind so we don't have to starve to go to the doctor?

The President. That's the key, get insurance. What we need to do is pass my health care plan that provides insurance to the poorest of the poor. Gives a voucher to the poorest, it gives a tax credit to the next bracket above that so that they can get insurance, make insurance available. It pools insurance, small businesses pooling insurance so they get the benefit that a big company has. If you buy a lot of something, you get it at a cheaper price. If you buy a lot of insurance, you get it at a cheaper price. If you pool small businesses so they represent a lot of purchases, you get insurance at a cheaper price. That is a part of it.

The other part of it is, we've got to go against this malpractice that is driving costs up to \$25 billion to \$50 billion. Doctors don't dare to deliver babies because of some frivolous suit, or hospitals say, give this guy three tests to protect us against a malicious lawsuit.

My program to control, put lids on these limitless lawsuits is really going to help bring health care costs down. And so will the pooling. And another thing about our plan is, right now people go to the emergency room and the hospital is stuck with

the bill. The people don't have insurance. If you have insurance, that takes a burden off the hospitals.

So we do have a good plan, and it really helps small business, I think. I don't know whether your employer is large or small, but whoever you work for, you'll be able to get it as an individual, and it will be portable. You take it with you if you find another job.

Who is in charge of the water here? Anybody? Here's one. Here, I'll just wander down like Phil Donahue and get myself a water. [*Laughter*] There you go. Thank you. That's great.

All right, shoot. I can hear you, sir.

Unemployment

Q. Psychological studies of unemployed people have been viewed as suffering from unemployment neurosis. The most prominent symptom is not depression but apathy. The blacks of America suffer disproportionately from this neurosis, as well as many other Americans. This mental state makes people incapable of grasping the helping hand which may be extended to them. Mr. Bush, for our information, what form has your helping hand taken, and how do you view the American jobless reaction to that hand?

The President. Well, I'm not a psychiatrist, and that's a very—I didn't know that. What I do know is, we're trying very hard with the programs I've outlined to give people jobs, break the cycle of dependency and welfare. And we have indeed given waivers to many States to change the welfare system that just breeds dependency.

You talk about a psychological neurosis. How would a kid feel, born into a, say, third or fourth generation? We've got to break that cycle. Learnfare and workfare—many of the States are trying, and I, through Dr. Lou Sullivan, our black Secretary of HHS who is a superb doctor and a great humanitarian, is trying hard to break that cycle. But the best way to break the cycle is a job with dignity in the private sector. And that's why my small business program that I mentioned—regulation, taxes, lawsuits—plus what we're talking about in enterprise zones is the answer. And we're going to get it done.

Ross Perot

Q. Mr. President, I was wondering which of Ross Perot's ideas on the economy and the deficit do you like? It seemed so often in the debate you and Mr. Clinton both said, "Yes, I agree with you, Ross." And upon your reelection, in your second term, any room for a job for Ross in your administration?

The President. Well, not on the tax side of things, because I don't want to raise the gasoline tax 50 cents a gallon, I mean, 50 cents. I just think that would be bad for working America, and I don't want that. So I differ with him. I don't think we ought to touch Social Security.

What I agree with him on is putting the focus on the need to get the deficit down. At the debates, there wasn't that much time, nor were there many specifics as to how to do that. I don't agree with him that what I've subsequently learned he's proposed, because it will, in my view, screech a fragilely growing economy to a halt. I just don't think it needs that kind of a shock.

I do agree with him on what we're doing about mortgaging the future of various people. I don't agree with him when he says we gave Saddam Hussein permission to take the northern part of Kuwait. That is simply not true. So we agree, I do agree with him on his dedication to trying to get the help on the POW question.

So I have some places I agree, some places I don't. Hey, but listen, I need all the help I can get. So, I don't know about future jobs, but let's get this election over, and then we'll see.

I think this claim the other day, I mean, that thing was strange, and I don't agree with him about that, obviously.

Ronald Reagan

Q. Mr. President, Ronald Reagan ran two of the most successful campaigns that we've ever seen in history. His influence or assistance in your campaign, and I don't mean him personally but maybe his camp of people, seems to be absent. Because I know part of the strategy in a campaign is to reach those voters that may be undecided, there is always a faction that will vote for you no matter what you do, and that faction that won't vote for you no matter what you

do. But why haven't you enlisted his people or him more to assist you in this campaign?

The President. Coincidence. Ronald Reagan will be going either tomorrow or the next day for me to North Carolina and someplace else. He's agreed to do it, and I hope he does. I campaigned at his side in Orange County. He has been more than helpful in everything we've asked him to do. You know, I had a meeting with the former—the Reagan Alumni Association, I think they call themselves, in Washington, headed by Ed Meese, remember, who used to be—very, very supportive.

So if there's a perception that they are not helping, I think that's an unfair perception. I hope that the more recent visits by the President will be focused on, because I can't ask for any more from him than what he's doing to be supportive. And the things he was saying, even my mother would have blushed when she heard the nice things he said about what we're trying to do. So he's with us.

Child Support

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to ask you about your views concerning another national tragedy: the billions of dollars owed single parents in uncollected child support. Presently 20 percent of the children in this county are living at or below the poverty level. As a trial attorney, what can I tell my clients about your future efforts, if you're elected next week, to eliminate this national dilemma?

The President. Tell them I just signed a bill last week, and that bill goes after the deadbeat dads. And it was passed by this Congress, thus demonstrating we can, even with them, get something done. And what it did was, where they needed Federal support, whether it's a passport or anything else, crack down on them and see that Federal support no longer—or any—Federal permission really to do things is not granted to those who are running away and leaving these people.

Because what happens, as you know, I'm sure, far better than I do because of your concern for usually the mother, that spouse, is that these people go across State lines. And until this legislation was passed, they

haven't been able to go at them. So I believe that legislation is a good step towards cracking down on these people who you're after, and will be helpful to those mothers, normally, that you're trying to help.

Closing Statement

Moderator. Mr. President, thanks for answering all of our questions in the past hour. And according to my old broken watch, we have about a minute left for you to make a closing statement, sir.

The President. Can it be a direct appeal? I hate to have this many voters—I mean, is there any restriction on it?

Well, let me just say that, one, thank you for everybody that did this, including the Historical Society and the Association of Broadcasters.

But look, this has been a terrible year in a sense. I believe I'm going to win the election. And I'm going to ask for everybody's support here. We have tried very hard to keep the public trust. We've had a clean administration. We've tried to serve with honor. We've literally changed the world through leadership. And what I'm asking people is this: Look, you're going to the polls, consider character. It is important.

Clinton's wrong when you said it's "the character of the Presidency," not the President. The President's character shapes the Presidency. They are interlocked. And I hope I have demonstrated the character. I hope I've earned the trust of the American people. I see this economy moving. I be-

lieve that our programs that I've outlined will lift up everyone that's hurting and give them a much better shot at the American dream. So that would be my appeal.

I must say in conclusion, I have never felt such a sea change in politics as I have in the last 2 weeks. It's beginning to happen. And people are looking at it: Who do you trust? Who has the character to serve in the Presidency of the United States? And that's why I'm asking for your vote and your support. And thank you all very, very much.

Moderator. Thank you, Mr. President. We appreciate your visit to Columbus, Ohio. I would like to make some quick thanks.

The President. I think it would be most appropriate if I started walking down to say hello to Nellie before she changes her mind back there at 91. *[Laughter]*

Moderator. I think that's a great idea.

The President. Is that all right?

Moderator. Absolutely.

The President. Okay. Don't move.

Note: The question-and-answer session began at 7 p.m. at the Ohio Historical Society. Moderators for the session were Gary Robinson, president of the Ohio Association of Broadcasters, and Columbus television anchors Doug Adair of WCMH-TV, Deborah Countiss of WSYX-TV, and Bob Orr of WBNS-TV. In his remarks, the President referred to Peter Ueberroth, chairman of the Rebuild L.A. Committee; Representative Chalmers P. Wylie; and Gov. Mario Cuomo of New York.

Statement on Signing the Veterans Home Loan Program Amendments of 1992

October 28, 1992

Today I am signing into law H.R. 939, the "Veterans Home Loan Program Amendments of 1992." On balance, the bill improves the Veterans Home Loan Program by authorizing new programs and expanding or extending existing programs.

I am, however, concerned that certain provisions of this bill raise serious constitutional concerns. For example, the race-

based classification of "Native Hawaiian" cannot be supported as an exercise of the constitutional authority granted to the Congress to benefit Native Americans as members of tribes. Therefore, this classification would be subject to the most exacting equal protection standards. I direct the affected Cabinet Secretaries to consult with the Attorney General in order to ensure that the